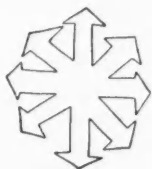


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CONTENTS

Myths, Ancient and Modern

- | | | |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|----|
| MIRCEA ELIADE | The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth | 1 |
| RITA FALKE | Problems of Utopias | 14 |
| JACQUES ELLUL | Modern Myths | 23 |

Society and the State

- | | | |
|-----------------|---|----|
| WALDEMAR VOISÉ | The Renaissance and the Sources of the
Modern Social Sciences | 41 |
| MICHEL COLLINET | Social Structures and the Power of
the State | 64 |
| BASIL DAVIDSON | Aspects of African Growth before A.D. 1500 | 79 |
| ALBERT GÉRARD | Romanticism and Stoicism in the American
Novel: From Melville to Hemingway,
and After | 95 |

BOOK REVIEWS

- | | |
|--|-----|
| ROBERT REDFIELD: <i>The Primitive World and Its Transformations</i> | 111 |
| BENJAMIN LEE WHORF: <i>Language, Thought, and Reality</i> | |
| JURGEN RUESCH and WELDON KEES: <i>Nonverbal Communication:
Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations</i>
(PETER KRAUSSER) | |
| J. BOISSELIER: <i>Tendances de l'art khmer: Commentaires sur 24 chefs
d'œuvre du Musée de Phnom-Penh</i> | 120 |
| B.-P. GROSlier and J. ARTHAUD: <i>Angkor, hommes et pierres</i> | |
| R. T. PAINE and A. SOPER: <i>The Art and Architecture of Japan</i> | |
| L. SICKMAN and A. SOPER: <i>The Art and Architecture of China</i> | |
| M. HALLADE: <i>Arts de l'Asie ancienne, thèmes et motifs, III: La Chine</i>
(A. W. MACDONALD) | |

Notes on the Contributors

125



THE PRESTIGE OF THE COSMOGONIC MYTH

A myth relates a sacred story, that is to say, it recounts a primordial event that occurred at the beginning of time. But to tell a sacred story is equivalent to revealing a mystery, because the characters in a myth are not human beings. They are either gods or civilizing heroes, and therefore their *gesta* constitute mysteries: man would not know these tales if they were not revealed to him. Consequently, a myth is a story of what happened—what the gods and supernatural beings did—at the beginning of time. “To recount” a myth is to proclaim what occurred then. Once “told,” in other words, once revealed, the myth becomes the apodictic truth: it establishes truth. “It is so because it is said to be so,” the Netsilik Eskimos declared in order to justify the validity of their sacred history and their religious traditions. The myth proclaims the advent of a new cosmic situation or narrates a primordial event, and so it is always the story of a “creation”; it tells how something has been effectuated, has begun to be. That is why the myth is interdependent with ontology; it deals solely with realities, with what really happened, with what was clearly manifest.

We are speaking, to be sure, of sacred realities because, in archaic societies, it is the sacred that is pre-eminently the real. Whatever belongs to the realm of the profane does not participate in being, precisely because the

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

profane was not ontologically founded by the myth; it has no instructive model. No god, no civilizing hero, ever revealed a profane act. Everything that the gods or the ancestors did, and consequently everything that the myths recount about their creative activity, is part of the realm of the sacred and therefore participates in being. On the other hand, what men do on their own initiative, without a mythical model, belongs to the realm of the profane; therefore it is, in the end, a vain and illusory activity.

Essentially, it is this aspect of the myth that should be stressed: the myth reveals absolute holiness because it recounts the creative activity of divine beings and discloses the sanctified nature of their works. In other words, the myth describes the varied and sometimes dramatic irruption of the sacred into the world. For this reason many primitive peoples do not recount myths indiscriminately at any time or place but solely during those seasons of the year that are richest in ritual (autumn, winter) or during an interval between religious ceremonies; in a word, during a lapse of sacred time.¹ It is the irruption of the sacred into the world—an irruption recounted by myth—which really establishes the world. Each myth tells how a reality came into being, whether it be a total reality like the cosmos or merely a fragment: an island, a species of vegetable, a human institution. In telling *how* things came to exist an explanation is also given, and, indirectly, another question is answered: *why* they came to exist. The “why” always overlaps with the “how.” And this is true for the simple reason that by telling *how* a thing is born one reveals a manifestation of the sacred, the ultimate cause of any real existence.

Everything that has been created occurred at the beginning of time: *in principio*. For all creation, all life, begins in time; before a single thing existed, its own time could not exist. There was no cosmic time before the cosmos came into existence. Before a certain vegetable species was created, time, which causes it to grow, bear fruit, and perish, did not exist. That is why all creation took place at the beginning of time. Time sprang up with the first appearance of a new category of existents.

On the other hand, every creation, being a divine act, also represents an irruption of creative energy into the world. Every creation springs from a plenitude. The gods create out of excessive power, out of an overflow of energy. Creation is the result of an ontological superabundance. That is why the myth, which recounts this sacred *ontophanie*, this triumphant manifestation of the fulness of being, became the exemplary model

1. R. Petazzoni, “The Truth of Myth,” *Essays on the History of Religions* (Leyden, 1954), pp. 11–23, esp. pp. 13 ff.

for all human activities. For it alone reveals the real, the superabundant, the efficacious. "We must do as the Gods did in the beginning," an Indian text asserts (*Shatapatha Brâhmana*, VII, 2, I, 4). "So did the Gods, and so do men," *Taittiriya Br.* (I, 5, 9, 4) adds. The dominant function of the myth is therefore to fix the models for all the rites and significant human activities—subsistence or marriage as well as work, education, art, or knowledge. In conducting himself as a fully responsible human being, man imitates the gods' exemplary gestures, copies their acts, be it a simple physiological function such as eating or a social, economic, cultural, or military activity. This faithful imitation of divine models has a twofold consequence: on the one hand, by imitating the gods, man remains within the sacred and therefore within the confines of reality; on the other, the world is sanctified by the uninterrupted reactualization of divine, exemplary gestures. The religious conduct of man contributes to the maintenance of the world's holiness.

It is rather interesting to note that religious man assumes a humanity that possesses a transhuman, transcendental model. He sees himself as truly man solely to the extent that he imitates the gods, the civilizing heroes of the mythical ancestors. This means that religious man wills himself to be different from what he happens to be at the level of his secular experience. Religious man is not given; he creates himself by drawing close to divine models. As we have already stated, these models are preserved by myths, by the story of divine *gesta*. Therefore the man who belongs to traditional societies, like modern man, believes himself to be created by history; but the only history that interests him is sacred history, revealed by myths—the history of the gods. Yet modern man wants to be constituted solely by human history, hence precisely by that sum of acts which, for pre-modern man, is of no interest, since it lacks divine models. What we wish to emphasize is that, from the start, religious man fixes the model he wishes to attain on a transhuman level—the level revealed by myths. A man becomes truly a man solely by conforming to the teachings of the myths, that is to say, by imitating the gods.

At this point let us illustrate these preliminary remarks on the structure and function of myths by a few examples concerned with sacred time and space. We chose sacred time and space because the behavior of religious man in regard to them represents the best illustration of the essential role played by the myth. In the eyes of religious man, space is not homogeneous: it exhibits fissures; that is to say, portions of space exist that are qualitatively different from others. There is a sacred and therefore "strong,"

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

significant space, and there are others, non-sacred spaces, which consequently lack structure and consistency—in a word, which are amorphous. Furthermore, this spatial non-homogeneity manifests itself to religious man by means of the experience of an antithesis between sacred space—the only one which is real, which truly exists—and all the rest, the shapeless expanse that surrounds him.

We must immediately add that the religious experience of the non-homogeneity of space constitutes a primordial one, homologous with a "founding of the world." This is not a matter of theoretical speculation but of a primary religious experience which precedes any reflection about the world. The world can be constituted, thanks to the fissure affecting space, because it is this fissure which marks the "fixed point," the central axis of all future orientation. Whenever the sacred manifests itself in any hierophancy, there is not only a split in the homogeneity of space but also a revelation of absolute reality which is in direct contrast to the non-reality of the vast, surrounding expanse. The manifestation of the sacred establishes the world ontologically. In the homogeneous and infinite expanse, where no guidepost is possible and therefore no orientation can be effected, hierophancy reveals an absolute "fixed point," a "center."

We can see the extent to which the discovery, or, one might say, the revelation, of sacred space holds an existential value for religious man; for nothing can begin, nothing can be done, without a prior revelation, and any orientation implies the existence of a fixed point. This is the reason why religious man has always endeavored to establish himself within the "center of the world." In order to live in the world, one must found it, and no world can be born in the "chaos" of homogeneity and in the relativity of secular space. The discovery of projection of a fixed point—the "center"—is equivalent to the creation of the world. We hasten to recall examples that illustrate in the clearest fashion the cosmological value of the ritual orientation and the construction of sacred space.

Any religion suffices to demonstrate the non-homogeneity of space as it is experienced by religious man. Let us select an example that is meaningful to everyone: a church in a modern city. In the eyes of the faithful this church participates in space other than that of the street where it happens to be. The door that leads to the inside of the church signifies, in actuality, a solution of continuity. At the same time the threshold that separates the two spaces indicates the distance between two worlds of being—secular and religious. This threshold is both the boundary that separates and contrasts these two worlds and the paradoxical place in

which these worlds communicate, where the transition from the profane to the sacred can be effected.

From what we have just said one can understand why the church participates in space that is entirely different from that of the human agglomerations which surround it. Within the sacred inclosure the profane world is transcended. At more archaic levels of culture this possibility of transcendence is expressed by diverse images of an opening:² there, within the sacred walls, communication with the gods has become possible; consequently, there must be a "door" up above through which the gods can descend to the earth and man, symbolically, can rise to the heavens. And, indeed, this was the case for many religions; the temple, properly speaking, represents an "opening" toward the heavens and insures communication between the world and the gods.

Any sacred space implies hierophancy, an irruption of the sacred, the result of which is to detach territory in the surrounding cosmic environment and to render it qualitatively different. If no theophany, no sign of any kind, sanctified a place, then man consecrated it. For, as we have seen, the sacred is pre-eminently the real—at once power, efficiency, source of life, and fertility. Religious man's desire to live within the sacred is equivalent, in fact, to his desire to be fixed within objective reality, to live in a real and effective world and not in an illusion. This behavior is confirmed on every level of life, but it is principally evident in religious man's desire to live uniquely in a sanctified world, that is to say, in a sacred space. This is why techniques of orientation have been elaborated; these are, properly speaking, techniques concerned with constructions of sacred space. But it would be wrong to believe that this refers to a human endeavor, that man is able to consecrate a space by his own effort. Actually, the ritual by which he constructs a sacred space is adequate only to the extent that he reproduces the work of the gods. And, as we have seen, it is myth that reveals the history of divine works to him, offering him a model he can imitate.

To attain a fuller understanding of the need to construct sacred space ritually, one must take into account the conception that primitive and traditional societies held of the world. A man from such a society believes that an antithesis exists between the territory which he and his people inhabit and the unknown and undetermined space that surrounds him. The former is the world, the cosmos; the latter is no longer a cosmos but

2. A few examples are to be found in my study, "Centre du monde, temple, maison," *Le Symbolisme cosmique des monuments religieux* (Rome, 1957), pp. 57-82, esp. pp. 72 ff.

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

a kind of "other world," an alien, chaotic space inhabited by larvae, demons, "foreigners" (and associated, moreover, with demons and the souls of the dead). At first glance this split in space seems to be due to the contrast between an inhabited and organized territory, therefore "cosmicized," and the unknown space that extends beyond its frontiers; we have "cosmos," on the one hand, and "chaos," on the other. But we will see that, while an inhabited territory is a "cosmos," this is precisely because it has been previously consecrated, because in one way or another it is the work of the gods or is in communication with the world of the gods.

All this emerges very plainly from the Vedic ritual concerning the occupation of a territory: possession becomes legally valid by virtue of the erection of an altar of fire dedicated to Agni. Because of this altar Agni is present, and communication with the world of the gods is assured. But the significance of the ritual is more complex; if all its articulations are taken into consideration, we see why the consecration of a territory is equivalent to its "cosmicization." Actually, the erection of an altar to Agni is nothing but a reproduction of creation on a microcosmic scale. The water with which the clay is mixed is associated with primordial water; the clay used for the base of the altar symbolizes the earth; the lateral walls represent the atmosphere; etc. Consequently, the erection of an altar of fire—which alone warrants the occupation of a territory—is equivalent to the cosmogony.³

An unknown, foreign, unoccupied territory nonetheless participates in the fluid and larva-like modality of chaos. In occupying it, man transforms it into cosmos by a ritual repetition of the cosmogony. What is to be "our world" must be "created" beforehand, and any creation possesses a mythical model: the gods' creation of the universe. When the Scandinavian colonists took possession of Iceland and cleared it, they did not look upon this enterprise either as an original endeavor or as a human and secular accomplishment. In their eyes this labor was but the repetition of a primordial act: the transformation of chaos into cosmos by the divine act of creation. Consequently, everything that is not "our world" is not yet a "world," and a territory becomes "ours" only by creating it anew—in other words, by consecrating it.

In this instance one realizes the major role played by the cosmogonic myth. For it is this myth that reveals how the world was first created. Men

3. Cf. the texts cited in my *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949), pp. 112 ff.; English trans., *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1955).

have but to imitate this instructive gesture of the gods. The following example illustrates what we have just said. According to a myth of the Achilpa, an Australian tribe, in the beginning the Holy Being, Numbakula, "cosmicized" their future territory, created their ancestor, and established their institutions. Numbakula fashioned a sacred stake from the trunk of a gum tree and, having first anointed it with blood, climbed it and disappeared into the heavens. This stake represents a cosmic axis, for the territory surrounding it became inhabitable and consequently transformed into a "world." For this reason the ritual role of the sacred stake is a considerable one; the Achilpa take it with them during their peregrinations, and they decide which direction to take according to the way the stake inclines. This allows the Achilpa, despite continuous travels, always to find themselves in "their world" and also to remain in communication with the heavens, where Numbakula had disappeared. If the stake is broken, catastrophe ensues; in a way, it is the "end of the world"—regression into chaos. Spencer and Gillen relate a legend in which the sacred stake was once broken and the entire tribe fell prey to anguish; its members wandered aimlessly for a while and finally sat on the ground and allowed themselves to die.⁴

This example is an admirable illustration of both the cosmological function of the ritual stake and its soteriological role; for, on the one hand, the ritual stake is a reproduction of the one employed by Numbakula to "cosmicize" the world and, on the other, the Achilpa believe that through it they can communicate with the celestial domain. And so human existence is made possible by this permanent communication with the heavens. The Achilpa's "world" becomes truly their world only to the extent that it reproduces the cosmos as organized and sanctified by Numbakula. One cannot live without a vertical axis that permits an opening into the transcendent and, at the same time, makes orientation possible; in other words, one cannot live in chaos. Once contact with the transcendent is broken and the orientation is disrupted, it is no longer possible to live in the world, and so the Achilpa allow themselves to die.

The ritual stake of the Achilpa "supports" their world and assures communication with the heavens. We have here the prototype of a cosmological image that was very widespread: that of the *axis mundi*, the cosmic axis that supports the heavens and simultaneously paves the way to the

4. Sir B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *The Arunta* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1927), I, 374, 386; cf. also E. de Martino, "Angoscia territoriale et riscatto culturale nel mito Achilpa delle origini," *Studi e materiali di storia della religione*, XXIII (1951-52), 51-66.

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

world of the gods. We cannot detail here the innumerable images of the cosmic axis. It will suffice to state that all myths which stress the Tree of the World, the Cosmic Mountains, pillars, stone columns, or ladders that link the earth with the heavens, express this fundamental idea: that a "center of the world" exists thanks to which communication with the heavens can be accomplished and around which the totality of the habitable world extends. The "center" is the place where a split in the ontological level was effectuated, where space becomes sacred, therefore pre-eminently real. This also means that the universe is created from its center and extends from a central point that is like its "navel." Thus, according to the *Rig Veda* (X, 149), the universe is born and evolves; it starts from a nucleus, from a central point. Jewish tradition is even more explicit: "His Holiness created the world like an embryo. Just as the embryo grows from the navel, so God began to create the world. Starting with the navel, it spread out thence in all directions."⁵

The occupation of an unknown or foreign territory, the establishment of a village, the construction of a sanctuary or merely of a house, constitute so many symbolical repetitions of the cosmogony. Just as the visible universe develops from a center and spreads in four directions, just so does the village grow around a crossroads. In Bali as well as in certain regions of Asia, when a new village is first under construction, an effort is made to find a natural crossroads where two perpendicular roads intersect. The division of the village into four sectors corresponds to the division of the universe into four horizons. Often an empty place is left in the middle of the village; there, a little later, the cultural house will be built, the roof of which will symbolically represent the heavens (in some cases the heavens are indicated by the top of a tree or by the image of a mountain).⁶ At the other end of the village one will find the world of the dead, symbolized by certain animals (snakes, crocodiles, etc.) or by ideograms depicting darkness.⁷ The cosmic symbolism of the village is repeated in the structure of the sanctuary or the cultural house. At Waropen, in New Guinea, the "house for men" is placed in the middle of the village. Its roof represents the celestial archway, and the four walls correspond to the four directions of space.

5. Rabbinical text cited in *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, p. 36.

6. C. Tg. Bertling, *Vierzahl, Kreuz und Mandal in Asien* (Amsterdam, 1954), p. 11.

7. This iconographic complex is to be found in China, India, Indonesia, and New Guinea (cf. Bertling, *op. cit.*, p. 8).

One is scarcely surprised to encounter analogous conceptions in ancient Italy and among the ancient Germans. We are, after all, dealing with an archaic and very widespread notion: the city is an *imago mundi*; consequently, its construction imitates cosmogony. The Roman *mundus* was a circular ditch, divided into four parts. It was both an image of the cosmos and an exemplary model of the human habitat. It has been correctly suggested that the *Roma quadrata* must be conceived not as having the shape of a square but as being divided into four parts.⁸ The *mundus* was obviously associated with the *omphalos*, the earth's umbilicus: the city was situated in the middle of the *orbis terrarum*. It has been demonstrated that the same ideas explain the structure of Germanic villages and cities.⁹ In extremely diverse cultural contexts we always find the same cosmological pattern and the same ritual scenario: settling down in a territory is equivalent to founding the world. In other words, man progressively occupies increasingly vast areas of the planet and "cosmicizes" them in accordance with the model revealed by the cosmogonical myth. Thanks to this myth, man also becomes a creator. At first glimpse all he seems to do is to repeat indefinitely the same archetypal gesture. In reality, however, he conquers the world, organizes it, and transforms the natural landscape into a cultural environment. Herein resides the great secret of myths: they incite man to create. They continuously open up new perspectives for his creative genius, although superficially they seem to paralyze human initiative because they appear to be intangible models.

In all traditional societies, to "cosmicize" a space is equivalent to consecrating it, because the cosmos, being a divine work, is sacred by virtue of its very structure. To live in a cosmos is, above all, to live in a sanctified space, one that offers the possibility of communication with the gods. We have seen that the Achilpa's sacred stake symbolizes both an opening toward the transcendent and communication with the heavens where Numbakula had disappeared. Hence the "cosmicization," therefore the consecration, of space by some kind of ritual technique of orientation is also repeated when a house is being built. One perceives this "cosmicization" in the very structure of the home. Among a good many archaic peoples, particularly among hunters and seminomadic shepherds, the home possesses a symbolism that transforms it into an *imago mundi*. Among the nomads the stake that supports their tent is associated with the cosmic axis; for sedentary peoples a central pillar or the hole for smoke evacua-

8. Cf. Werner Müller, *Kreis und Kreuz* (Berlin, 1938), pp. 60 ff.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 65 ff.

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

tion¹⁰ plays the same role. All this represents the symbolism of the "center of the world"; having examined it in several prior works, we shall not come back to it.¹¹ And so we conclude: just as occupied territory, the city or village, reproduces the universe, so does the home also become an *imago mundi* because of the ritual orientation and the symbolism of the center.

In summary we might say that traditional societies want to live continuously in a sacred space and that it is myth which teaches them how they must build this sacred space: by imitating the work of the gods—cosmogony. Therefore the myth forces religious man to become responsible for the creation of the world in which he has chosen to live. To settle down in a land, to build a village, calls for a vital decision, an existential choice. For tragic, bloody cosmogonies also exist, and, as the imitator of divine gestures, man is compelled to repeat these gestures. The bloody sacrifices on the occasion of building a city or a house are explicable in terms of the need to imitate the primordial sacrifice by virtue of which the gods created the cosmos.

Since "our world" is a cosmos, any external attack threatens to transform it into chaos. And since "our world" was founded by imitating the exemplary work of the gods—cosmogony—those enemies who attack it are associated with the enemies of the gods, the demons and especially the archdemon, the primordial dragon that was conquered by the gods in the beginning of time. An attack against "our world" can be likened to the revenge of the mythical dragon that rebels against the work of the gods, against the cosmos, attempting to reduce it to nothingness. The enemies are ranked with the powers of chaos. Any destruction of a city is equivalent to a regression to chaos. Any victory against the attacker repeats the gods' exemplary victory over the dragon (that is, over chaos). The dragon is the exemplary figure of the sea monster, of the primordial serpent, a symbol of the cosmic waters, of darkness, of night and death—in short, of the amorphous, the potential—everything that has no "form." The gods had to conquer and destroy the dragon so that the cosmos could be created. It was with the body of Tiamat, the sea monster, that Marduk fashioned the world. Just as the gods' triumph over the forces of darkness, of death and chaos is repeated each time the city is victorious over its invaders, so must the gods' victory over the dragon be repeated symbolically each year; for each year the world must be re-created.

10. Cf. *my Le Chamanisme* (Paris: Payot, 1951), pp. 235 ff.

11. Cf. *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, pp. 30 ff.; *Images et symboles* (Paris: Gallimard, 1952), pp. 33 ff.; and "Centre du monde, temple, maison," *op. cit.*, *passim*.

And so we see that the principal function of the cosmogonic myth is to serve as an exemplary model for the periodic regeneration of time. Each new year is a resumption of time from its beginning, that is to say, a repetition of the cosmogony. A great many of the New Year's rituals can be explained as an attempt to revive primordial time, "pure" time, the time of the creation. The ritual struggle between two groups of contestants, the return of the dead, the saturnalia and orgies—all these are elements which signify that, at the end of this year and while we await the new one, the mythical advent representing the transition from chaos to cosmogony is being repeated. The Babylonian New Year's ceremony, the *akîtu*, is fairly conclusive. During this ceremony, *Enuma elish*, the "Poem of the Creation," was recited. This ritual recitation revived the struggle between Marduk and the sea monster, Tiamat, which took place at the beginning of time. This struggle was re-enacted by two groups of contestants. The mythical event became actual. "May he continue to vanquish Tiamat and abbreviate its days!" the person officiating would exclaim. The struggle, Marduk's victory, and the creation of the world were taking place at that very instant, *hic et nunc*.¹²

Why did men from traditional societies feel the need to relive the cosmogony annually? In order to regenerate the world by reintegrating original sacred time, the time when the creation of the world occurred. On the Iranian New Year's Day, called the *Nauroz*, the king would proclaim: "Here is a new day of a new month of a new year; we must renew what time has worn out!" Time had worn out human beings, society, the cosmos; and this destructive time was profane time, duration—to be exact, history. For time, like space, is not homogeneous; there is a sacred time, eternally present because it is eternally repeatable, and profane time, the irreversible duration which implacably leads to death. And just as religious man wishes to live continuously in a sacred space, where the possibility of communication with the divine world exists, so does he attempt to escape from the confines of profane time and to rediscover sacred time.

In all the pre-Judaic religions sacred time was the time of the myth. primordial time, in which the exemplary acts of the gods were accomplished. But in reactualizing primordial time, that profane time which was already past, the time that contains death in its own duration, was suppressed. All the individual and collective purifications that took place on the occasion of the new year came after the abolition of time gone by and, consequently, after the abolition of all that time had worn out. Time was

12. Cf. *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*, pp. 89 ff.

The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth

reborn "pure," just as it was in the beginning, from the very fact that at each new year the world was created anew. By reiterating the cosmogony, primordial sacred time was restored. The re-creation of the cosmos implied the regeneration of time. The interdependence of the cosmos and cosmic time was so thoroughly perceived by pre-modern man that in many languages the term designating the "world" is employed to mean the "year." For example, certain North American tribes say "the world is past," or "the earth is past," to mean that "a year has passed."¹³

By examining the cosmological symbolism of the temples, we gain a better understanding of this close kinship between space and sacred time. Since it is an *imago mundi*, a cosmos in miniature, the temple also represents the cosmic, temporal rhythms. The Vedic altar was not merely the cosmos; it was also the year—that is to say, cyclical time. Besides its cosmological symbolism, the Temple of Jerusalem also possessed a temporal symbolism: the twelve loaves of bread that were placed on the table were the twelve months, and the candelabra with seventy branches represented the Decans. In the Greco-Latin domain, H. Usener showed his thorough understanding of the etymological kinship between *templum* and *tempus*. We find an analogous symbolism on archaic levels of culture. The Dakota Indians affirm that the year is a circle around their sacred hut, which represents the world.¹⁴ The profound reason for all these symbols is clear: the temple is the image of the sanctified world. The holiness of the temple sanctifies both the cosmos and cosmic time. Therefore, the temple represents the original state of the world: the pure world that was not worn out by time or sullied by an invasion of the profane. This is the very image of the world as it was before history, at the very moment when it emerged from the hands of the Creator.

It is fitting to note that, by periodically repeating the cosmogony and by annually regenerating time, religious man is attempting to recover the original purity and holiness of the world as still preserved symbolically in the temple. In other words, religious man wants to live in a cosmos that is similar in holiness to that of the temple. The cosmogonic myth reveals to him how to rediscover this primordial holiness of the world. Therefore, thanks to the cosmogonic myth, religious man from the pre- and extra-Mosaic societies attempts to live in continuous imitation of the gods. It is this myth that teaches him how to found a humanity beyond man's

13. A. L. Kroeber, *Handbook of the Indians of California* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1925), pp. 177, 498.

14. Werner Müller, *Die blaue Hütte* (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1954), p. 133.

immediate, profane experience—a humanity that finds its model in the transcendental world of the Gods.

All creations—divine or human—are definitively dependent upon this model which constitutes the cosmogony. To create is, after all, to remake the world—whether the “world” happens to be a modest cabin, a humble tool, or a poem. The repetition of the cosmogony, whether periodic or not, is not an absurd and childish superstition of a humanity squatting in the darkness of primordial stupidity. In deciding to imitate the gods and to repeat their creative acts, primitive man had already taken upon himself that which, later, was revealed to us, the moderns—the very destiny of man. By this I mean the creation of the world we live in, the creation of the universe in which one wishes to live.

PROBLEMS OF UTOPIAS

When, in the year 1516, Sir Thomas More wrote his book about the ideal state, he located it on the Island of Utopia, which was supposed to have been discovered by Raphael Hythlodæus, a companion of Vespucci on his fourth voyage. At first a fictitious geographical name, the term "utopia" continues to live in the minds of men, although it no longer is relevant to geography or to voyages of discovery and is by no means necessarily connected with the description of ideal states. Today, according to dictionaries and encyclopedias, "utopian" describes any plan which seems impossible to realize; the word is weighted either with resigned regret or with the forbearance of the sensible soul who well knows that the ideal state would in the end prove no better than the existing one.

This stretching of a concept which had already happened when the word "utopia" was accepted in dictionaries¹ is offset by a tendency toward greater precision and limitation which, although it did not modify the meaning of the word in the mind of the general public, did again and again help to determine how it was used in literature and in criticism. For, in the language of writers of the 1920's, "utopia" signifies the ideal, a belief in which is necessary for the salvation of mankind. "To be filled

Translated by Edith Cooper.

1. Since the middle of the nineteenth century. The large dictionaries and encyclopedias of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries do not contain it at all.

with the spirit of utopia" means to want to save humanity by the belief in an ideal. The substance of the ideal can vary. The authors are united only in the belief that mankind is in need of an ideal—one, moreover, which is manifestly dependent on man, differing thus from Plato, for whom ideas exist in absolute space, removed from empiricism and history and completely independent of any effect they may have on human beings or even of men's awareness of them. To be sure, the equating of "ideal" with "utopia" by the writers of the twenties has, through its strongly emphasized sociological reference, come closer again to the concept which we connect with the *Utopia* of More and the *Republic* of his model, Plato; but the word has much stronger ethical implications than it did for More.

One can even go a step farther—both in the direction of the authors of the twenties and in the direction that the word "utopia" has taken in the common consciousness. In the utopias of our time one no longer wants to prove that belief in an ideal will save mankind, nor does one wish to provoke regret or forbearance (which spring, after all, from a longing for things to be as they are pictured). Modern writers describe either the annihilation of those who have lost their faith (in God or in an ideal) before the power of those who have a faith—albeit in something which the authors reject—or they awaken fear and dread by depicting the other side of a plan consistently carried out. Often, then, both intentions merge: the aimlessness of one group makes it a prey to the ideology disseminated and hammered home with subtle force by the other. Thus the word "utopia" is used to designate not only works describing a plan which cannot be realized (such a use would correspond to the general linguistic use characterized earlier) but also works describing something whose realization is to be feared because it is both possible and dreadful.

This would seem to be quite the opposite of utopia as we know it from More. But, in fact, fiction here, too, is only continuing in the same direction by following along lines laid down in the works of Plato and More and their successors—lines we are surprised to see converge with tendencies in our own historical reality. In the age-old literary concepts, these lines were not noticed until they manifested themselves in reality. Sometimes, to be sure, they are overlooked even today, and one may read that the ancient utopists painted "ideal" pictures while modern ones depict "horror." Such an antithesis overlooks the fact that the ancient utopists, too, described something frightening: the totalitarian state. What really differentiates the ancient from the modern is the intention of the authors.

Problems of Utopias

Plato, More, and the utopists of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries wanted to show "ideal" constructs and possibly themselves believed that it would be nice if their plans became reality. The modern utopists cannot desire a realization, but they believe one possible, in greater degree since their plans did not spring from their own imagination. But the horrible part of their visions is precisely something which is integral to the ancient utopias: the fact that men lose, or are robbed, of their individuality on principle and are allowed to be nothing more than functionaries of the state.

We need not be surprised if, now that utopias have assumed the form sketched above, critics recognize the same tendencies in the ancient utopias as well, since both grew from the same root. Writer and critic alike have had their sensibilities sharpened by the experiences of the immediate past which both have had to endure. Utopias are now being written in order to explain and to understand political reality. This reality—the totalitarian state—is designated as utopia. Elements of this state are now identified in the ancient utopias: the theoreticians and politicians of totalitarian states recognize the components of the ancient utopias as similar and suitable to their own practice and thus legalize measures of their own, their opponents doing the same in order to condemn totalitarian systems. Of course there have been pointers in that direction in earlier treatises. Robert von Pöhlmann, for example, sees that "too large a sacrifice of freedom and self-determination was demanded" of the guardians of Plato's republic,² but this insight might be countered with the fact that the guardians, on the contrary, possessed true liberty, which is the freedom to educate one's self.³ Otto Apelt, in translating Plato, shows the clearest understanding. He points to the historical situation, in which it could not have been Plato's desire "to want to transform every individual into a truly virtuous person"; rather, he aimed at constructing a state which would allow men, by participating in it, to participate in virtue.⁴ These critics, whose arguments we find in the writings of several others as well, are united by the insight that that which is described in the *Republic* needs an explanation and interpretation if the modern reader is really to consider this state as "ideal." After 1933, treatises appeared in

2. Robert von Pöhlmann, *Geschichte der sozialen Frage und des Sozialismus in der antiken Welt* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1912), II, 30.

3. Ulrich v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Platon* (after the 3d ed. published by the author and edited by Bruno Snell) (Frankfurt a.M., 1948), esp. p. 54.

4. Platon, *Der Staat*, ed. Otto Apelt (5th ed.; Leipzig: Felix Meiner, 1920), Introduction, p. viii.

Germany which only pretended to argue with Plato; their true intention was to lend weight and justification to the author's own opinions by referring to the Platonic doctrine. Even the reverse is found. Plato is accepted as an ideologically supportable writer because his ideas agree with those of National Socialism! And, indeed, this claim by the partisans of a totalitarian state is not altogether unfounded and, since the end of the second World War, has often been stressed. I shall cite here only the formulation by Bertrand Russell, since it states the fact and also points out the philosophical and literary problem: "Plato possessed the art to dress up illiberal suggestions in such a way that they deceived future ages, which admired the *Republic* without ever becoming aware of what was involved in its proposals."⁵

This implies that for centuries admiration for Plato has stood in the way of a sober view of his suggestions and that Plato has "tricked" these centuries. The latter, however, is true not only for Plato's literary agility in general (the art to "dress up" in such a way); rather this aspect of the deception is carried so far that, cunningly, it is taken over into the construction itself and is, in fact, a conscious deception. For Plato's state has been built, in his own words, on the foundation of "an untruth of that indispensable kind . . . , that is, a single, thoroughly well-intentioned lie" (*Republic* 414-15), namely, the myth that the deity who created man put either gold, silver, or brass into his soul, thus predestining him for his position in the state. Plato intended this myth to be believed by the rulers as well, at least from the second generation on, making it an indispensable, well-intentioned lie—if it is absolutely necessary and of the utmost importance that the state remain in the form once given it and be ruled by the same group of men! If every man has been put in his place by divine providence, it would be not only a political but also a religious transgression to envy someone of higher rank or to go so far as to plot his overthrow. This myth, this "beautiful lie" ("beautiful" because closest to the truth; "lie" for not being truth: for, where one cannot know how things really happened, approximations have to suffice), Plato makes the basis of his republic. "Real lies," however, are not tolerated. Works of fiction are "real lies" inasmuch as they do not extol political or warlike virtues. Those which, on the other hand, do "hew the line," are "beautiful lies," well intentioned and useful, exactly like those which must be used occasionally for the common good by the regent of a city. We can no

5. Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1945), p. 105.

Problems of Utopias

longer be blind to the fact that the "truth" which these "beautiful lies" approximate and which justifies their existence in the "ideal state" is identical with what is expedient for the state. And that, as we know, is a relative concept of truth.

The various laws, too, which regulate life in the polity, have been passed for the use of the state and at the expense of the individual. The communal life of the guardians, for instance, involves reciprocal control and a control on the part of the public; their lack of possessions (they are supported by the artisans) has been decreed so that they will turn their thoughts toward the good of the state rather than toward making money; the decree that all education is reserved for them speaks for itself; so does the one about "subtly devised lots" to bring together suitable partners for the begetting of children, or the one about the state rearing or killing newborn children as it sees fit. These details make clear how much Plato agrees with modern utopian novels in just the vital point. In the *Republic*, too, nothing counts but the function in the state; the spiritual independence of the individual is annihilated. "Though his ideal state is ruled by philosophers, there is no more freedom in it than if it were ruled by *Gauleiters*. In fact, there is less freedom, because philosophers can crush freedom more effectively, being more able to detect any nonconformist idea. They are prepared to allow a certain latitude in matters of little importance, such as trade, but in matters of art and education, that is to say, in all that relates to intellectual freedom, they are completely ruthless."⁶

Modern totalitarian states (as well as the novels which deal with them) and the Platonic republic thus agree that all power resides in the state. The intention of the authors, however, is different in the two cases, and this probably explains how it was possible for Plato to "deceive" readers of all times until the present. Plato's exposition is an "artificial construction,"⁷ a definition: the "best" state is defined, and is, according to Plato's scheme, that which comes closest to the idea of state: that which is "most statelike," and, consequently, in which there are no separate destinies for those who support it. Plato does not pretend to describe the state "most pleasant" to men; and we have some reason to doubt that his philosopher-pupils, for all the interest taken in political affairs in antiquity, would strongly have desired life in his republic; they were probably relieved to have Plato's assurance that this state, like all ideas, was unattainable. But they admitted that his construction was right; it was a matter of course

6. Marie Louise Berneri, *Journey through Utopia* (London: Routledge, 1950), p. 29.

7. *Der Staat*, Introduction, p. ix.

for them to accept his historical and social premises because these were their own. And the rightness of his construction has been fascinatingly proved by the practice of totalitarian states two-and-a-half millennia later.

But Plato's claim that in his state everyone should get what was due him, that he should take the place naturally right for him, was quite another matter. Here Plato demonstrates nothing, except his "art . . . to deceive future ages." For the belief in the natural predestination of each individual is founded on myth; and those who above all belong in this state and are finally to be happy there, the philosopher-guardians, have to be specially treated. Throughout life they are educated to consider the way of life in the republic as the only one possible and therefore the best. The means used by modern authors to achieve the same aim are much cruder, but, after all, they do not have for audience an educated Greek aristocracy to convince of the desirability of their state! Either they let their humans reproduce chemically from the beginning and then according to norms of character and natural gifts or they expose them to constant propaganda. In the first case, that of chemically graded people, no education is necessary at all; in the second case, the state in question has to re-educate each person anew to its ideology—an endless task. The contents of these utopian novels then is just this clash between the individual and the utopia, and in this they hardly differ in part from theoretical treatises. The story ends with the destruction of the individual. "Story" is to be taken here not only in the sense of tale, account, or novel but in a much larger sense: when there is no longer any individual action, we have the virtual end of history. And that, since time immemorial, is the aim of every utopia.

In general, the utopia is an end condition. Raymond Lully in his novel *Blanquerna* (ca. 1284), for example, proceeds systematically to reach it. Blanquerna first issues edicts for his monastery, then for his diocese, and finally for all believers and for the whole world. After that he can retire serenely into a hermitage, because (and here is his answer to all pleas to remain in office) the world is now so perfectly organized that its order can no longer be shaken.

And Sir Thomas More's *Island of Utopia*? It was founded—and this has supposedly been historically recorded—1,760 years before the fourth voyage of Vespucci, when it was first reported. But the only historical personality (and the only person named at all) is King Utopus. We are not surprised that there were no artists, but technicians—might they not

Problems of Utopias

have been recorded in the chronicle? But this document evidently preserves only the passage of time, eternally the same. Of Utopus, too, we know only that he passed laws and that the laws were so good that they were able to continue unchanged and, moreover, to allow the utopia to remain unchanged. These laws, then, which made utopia into the ideal state, at the same time caused its cessation as history: it could have been founded just as well five hundred, or fifty, or five years ago. The later utopias, too, imagine a state which exists after the victory of socialism, marking the last war of humanity. Anatole France having signaled this lack of historicalness,⁸ it has now become the central theme with a number of modern authors: Kastalien, the utopia of Hermann Hesse,⁹ is an enclave next door to history, questionable in its right to an existence, although it does continue to exist despite the fact that the Master of the Revels, Josef Knecht, emerges into "real life," into the historical world. In Franz Werfel's *Stern der Ungeborenen*¹⁰ this state beyond history comes to an end; the war waged by these space-minded humans imposes destinies on them, making them into individuals experiencing history.

The first utopia of world literature, again Plato's *Republic*, is particularly illuminating on the problem of the historicity of the utopia. In this dialogue the "ideal state" is outlined, defined, and described in detail, pointed somewhat in the direction of his contemporary model, Sparta, which is outlined as an aim toward which to strive. But this implies that the *Republic* is an ideal for the future, a utopia after the end of history; then perhaps there will be a state which resembles it, and to it the philosopher is to dedicate his powers. The state is described also as an idea in the world to come, "in Heaven, perhaps, set up as a model," which one can at best approach but never reach; it is outside history, without being influenced by it in any way. This ideal state is also, however, supposed to have existed once before in the past: in the *Timaeus* the participants recall from the "conversation of the day before" that the state of the philosopher-guardians agreed in all its particulars with that state of which the grandfather of Critias had received news through Solon: the *Ur-Athens*, founded by the goddess Athene and destroyed, like everything terrestrial, by one of those catastrophes which, according to the reports of the Egyptian

8. *Sur la pierre blanche* (Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1905); English trans.: *The White Stone* (London and New York: John Lane, 1910).

9. *Das Glasperlenspiel* (Zürich: Fretz & Wasmuth, 1943); English trans.: *Magister Ludi* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1949).

10. (Stockholm: Berman-Fischer, 1946); English trans.: *Star of the Unborn* (New York: Viking Press, 1946).

priests, occur every nine thousand years and obliterate all records. Here, that which had been thought and expressed in the *Republic* is transmitted to a (fictive) historical reality; at the same time that which had been projected to the farthest future, the end of time, is moved to the most distant past (known only to the Egyptian priests). This exchange or identification of wished-for periods is understandable. For one thing, past and future are equally remote from the poet;¹¹ and for another, there is, as we have seen, simply no place for utopia within history.

But it is remarkable that Plato emphatically distinguishes this past future-ideal from the age of Cronus, in which the earth was paradise and men knew the language of the animals and did not work for their food and clothing but lived, rather, on the fruits of the fields. If the people of that age had used their gifts and their leisure to philosophize about the real nature of the gods, then Plato in all justice would probably have had nothing to object to in their state of affairs. But men did not strive for perfection, as only the philosopher does; they could think of nothing better to do than to write poetry, invent myths—"true lies" which ascribe actions and intentions to the gods, the imitation of which is not to be recommended and which, in fact, are condemned in the ideal state of the philosopher-king. The age of Cronus, then, Plato must repudiate; but this does not prevent it from being the ever recurring dream of humanity. To be sure, what is alluring about it is just what Plato rejects: poetry and love, which flowered in this golden age. About two thousand years passed before Montaigne praised that condition for this very reason—because there was "nulle cognoissance de lettres,"¹² which was then taken up by the encyclopedists in their praise of the "bon sauvage" and viewed by the romantics, weary of civilization.

In the utopias of today poetry and love have been eliminated; the first expressly, the second simply by the fact that no room is left for a private life. And here, again, we meet a distinction between ancient and modern utopias which we have already mentioned by implication. In the early utopias up to the eighteenth and even into the nineteenth centuries, private life is merely curtailed in a naïve sort of way. The authors intend, like

11. We cannot resist quoting a philological parallel and its interpretation here, the German word *einst* ("one day"): "... 'one day' is a word of scope, it has two faces. It looks back, into solemnly twilight distances, and it looks forwards, far, far, forwards, into space, and is not less solemn because it deals with the to-be than that other dealing with the has-been" (Thomas Mann, *Joseph and His Brothers*, Vol. IV: *Joseph the Provider*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter [New York: Alfred Knopf, 1944], Part V, "Tamar Learns the World," p. 310; *Joseph und seine Brüder*, Vol. II [Stockholm: S. Fischer Verlag, 1952], p. 1741).

12. Essay "Des Cannibales."

Problems of Utopias

Plato, to create an ideal state and to ignore what happens to the individual in this state. Modern authors know that a "myth of the state"¹³ has emerged which, if it became concrete, would leave men no private sphere. Therefore they draw out and reinforce the tendencies already found to be moving toward concreteness and show how the individual is devoured by the machine of state. He might, for all that, be living in a "golden age" in which tedious work is taken over by machines and daily subsistence offers no problems—a "golden age," indeed, in which it is forbidden to write poetry or to think. Perhaps we had better forego this term and confine ourselves to "utopia," knowing that it can be terrible and that we would not settle for it even in its best and most pleasant form.¹⁴

13. Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1946).

14. We know only two utopias (*not* descriptions of a golden age!) in which human liberty is granted: it is the very theme in Rabelais' monastery, Thelema; and in Voltaire's Eldorado (in *Candide*), liberty is included in the principle of tolerance. Despite a baroque or ironical framework, both utopias are true ideals.

MODERN MYTHS

I

The time is past when "myth" could be considered serenely, when *μυθος* could be translated as "legend," or when Littré could define it as follows: "A story pertaining to time or facts that history does not clarify and embracing either a real fact transformed into a religious notion or the invention of a fact with the help of an idea." It was calmly asserted that the myth concerned formal divinities, that it was the means of expressing the relationship between these divinities and men—hence the historical form it most frequently assumed. But, in any case, it was a matter of the past. The gods were indeed dead, and the stories regarding them no longer concerned us. The nineteenth century, the century of reason, was devoid of myths, and only the "poets" (falsifiers!) regretted this. But along came the psychology of the unconscious, then sociology and history, to give a fresh meaning, and thereby vigor, to these dusty tales incorporated in Greco-Latin mythology. No longer were they a childish invention to lend color to a naïve religion. We perceived instead subtle expressions of the profound and complicated tendencies of man, and the divinities involved in these myths were no longer the simple gods of thunder and of time. Complex characteristics enriched their personalities. They assumed unprece-

Translated by Elaine Halperin.

Modern Myths

dented dimensions. Cronus and Zeus were cloaked in mystery—the mystery of man. And by a strange reversal, what seemed childish then was not the imaginary myth but the rationalist philosophy that had contested it because of its failure to understand.

Cicero appeared to be far more naïve than Homer. And analysis of the myths themselves led to a far deeper understanding of something permanent in man, of a certain relation with the universe and a certain structural pattern within his soul. We are familiar with the researches of Jung, Caillois, Mircea Eliade, and Dumézil;¹ although diversified in subject matter, they all possess a common core. At the same time we perceived that these myths fulfilled diverse functions. Thus a distinction was made between explicative, etiological myths that shed light on the name of a place or a people, on the origins of a custom or an institution, and ontological myths that express some profound and permanent truth about man, revealing him as mirroring himself. And it seemed that perhaps this self-revelation became possible only in the remote past, when man discovered a language suitable for the expression of what was deepest in him and could not be articulated by direct means. But this discovery led to speculation about the absence of myths in our modern world. If it is true that this image expresses man's permanent drives, can it be that those drives no longer exist today? Yet there are some who believe that the myth has ceased to be dominant in the essential sectors of life. But is it conceivable that twentieth-century man exists without reference to the sacred and the mysterious? Obviously, we today have exorcized these qualities only nominally and superficially and at precisely those points where they were actually non-existent. If, however, myth is not connected with belief in formal divinities that have been recognized as such, and if these divinities are merely an outward disguise, a rhetorical device—an arrow pointing to something else—then the fact that they have become outmoded does not explain why myth no longer exists. Actually, however, it was speedily realized that it did continue to exist, although it was difficult to grasp, and even more difficult to analyze. Its domain is poorly marked out, its nature fleeting, and writers on the subject have piled up definitions that do not agree.

One of the difficulties certainly stemmed from the desire to give myth a general definition, one that would be valid for Hindu as well as for

1. See, e.g., C. G. Jung, *Modern Man in Search of a Soul* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1933); Roger Caillois, *Le Mythe et l'homme*; Mircea Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris: Payot, 1949), English trans.: *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (London and New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958); Georges Dumézil, *Les Mythes romains* (Paris: Gallimard).

Greco-Roman, for Semitic as well as for Western, myths of the twentieth century. The temptation to do this was great, for, if myth is the expression of profound, permanent tendencies, then it should be possible to define it in universal terms. But wanting too much led to excessive abstraction, and thus myth itself lost what seems to be essential—its vitality, its evolutive capacity, its dynamism. A unique definition of myth robs it of the very thing that makes it myth: the interpretation of a very direct relation between man and the temporal structure of his life. Apart from this relationship there is nothing but dust and absurdity. It seems to me to be impossible to formulate a common definition for our twentieth-century myths and those of three thousand years ago because I am not in the same situation as the man of that era. And if myth is the mirror of reflective man, if it explains man as action, if it is the justification and execution of his *hic et nunc* situation, if, finally, it is the image, deep within his mysterious self, of his confrontation with a given reality, then it cannot be, by its very nature, identical today and at other times. In its manifestation myth is necessarily specific. But, on the other hand, its characteristics and its reasons are constant and general. Directly related to a given civilization, this mode of expression will obviously assume a form that is most suitable for the man of that civilization. And to the very extent that our civilization is atheist (not a-religious, but simply refusing to recognize a formal divinity worshiped as such), myth nowadays will not take on the guise of a few active gods to be addressed collectively or individually and around whom the traditional patterns of relationship with divinity are organized. But myth always includes an element of belief, of religious adherence, of the irrational, without which it could never express on behalf of man what it was supposed to convey. Religious sentiment can apparently center in everything other than a formal divinity. And doubtless we find ourselves here in the presence of a clarifying process. However things may be today, man indicates that he is more religious than ever, while remaining at the same time skeptical toward institutionalized religions. He worships the Christian God no longer but other secret divinities. Although he is not yet aware that they are, for him, divinities, he clings to them even more vigorously than to life itself because they represent his *raison d'être*. They are simultaneously the object and the vivifying emotional element of myths. Moreover, if myth, linked as it is to a civilization, expresses its profound meaning, if it enables man to become an integral part of his civilization and possibly also to reduce the tensions between himself and his milieu, then obviously it can relate only to the nerve center of this

Modern Myths

natural and social structure, this compound of artifice and the primordial, in which he is called upon to live.

Although formerly determined by awareness of the passage of time and of the threatening character of nature, the confrontation expressed in these terms is no longer the one which in actuality haunts the man of the twentieth century, because he has become too much the master of things. He is now solitary, and what haunts him is his lack of virtue, of certainty regarding himself. Who will be his guarantors, now that nature's obstacles have been swept away and there is no longer any counterweight to his sovereign action? It is fine to possess atomic power. But to find one's self alone in the possession of this power, to know that one is responsible for every decision and that one's own strength is all that can be relied upon, amounts to an intolerable situation. Regardless of whether myths reconstruct an environment in which man will feel reassured because he is no longer solitary, or whether they redefine the meaning of this adventure in which the past guarantees the future, they are necessarily common to all who constitute a part of this civilization. We might be able to say that, since all men are placed in a common situation, before an identical question, it will be possible, with respect to this civilization, in the same degree in which the image will be common to all, for it to reveal itself as a myth.

II

Correlative to a given civilization, myth expresses its profound tendencies. It is not superstructure in that it does not confine itself to being a translation of material structures; neither is it an ideological veil for something that exists but which one would prefer not to see, nor a vulgar justification of an actuality that is felt to be unjust. It is far more than that and, in certain respects, more essential than the material structure itself. Indeed, this structure is nothing in itself; it becomes important only insofar as it is reflected in the conscience of man, who takes a stand in relation to this economic life, this technological development, this expansion of the state. He interprets them and thus gives them meaning. Moreover, through a reaction of his entire being, he perceives perhaps unconsciously the direction of their evolution, which he both fears and desires. All this he expresses in myth, which thereafter appears simultaneously as mankind's stand in relation to these structures and as the meaning which it attributes to them. Inasmuch as this economic or political life greatly depends on the actions of man, the image he creates of it and, even more, the picture

he forms of the direction taken by evolution have a decisive importance for evolution itself. Myth appears as the condition governing the adherence of the masses of men to a certain civilization and to its processes of development or of crisis. At the same time myth explains man's continuity within this civilization. To be sure, because they express in the form of a psychological image the reality of these structures, myths are themselves influenced by this material framework which they in turn are destined to influence. This explains why these myths, although all grafted upon the deepest layers of the individual psyche, can be very diverse and basically different according to the varying contexts of civilization.

New myths appear whenever man is confronted with a radically new situation, one that has nothing in common with its predecessor—as if a fresh “beginning” were taking place, which is actually the case today. A society may have mainly regressive and explanatory myths even when ours are progressive and active, yet both express the same fundamental tendencies of the individual. But this individual is not situated in the same economic and political context. However that may be, it is quite certain that in our Western civilization myths are connected with action and impel toward it. As regards action, the definition of myth as the “motivating global image” is certainly the most exact. It is indeed a vigorous and strongly colored representation, irrational and imbued with the individual's total capacity for belief. Most often it is an unconscious image, for the religious charge which informs it gives it an aspect of obviousness and certitude so fundamental that to become aware of it is dangerous. Awareness might risk the weakening of certitude, and he who vaguely senses this eludes the lucidity of conceiving myth as it really is, to take refuge in certitude. It is always easy to discern the myths of others—accompanied by astonishment that someone else can succumb to such absurd images. But what reluctance to embark on an analysis of one's own myths!

Finally, myth must be global. It embraces all the elements of a situation or action, providing at one and the same time an explanation and synthesis of them, an indication of their future and of their necessity. It is this totality of the myth that matters, not some particular fleeting aspect which, on the morrow, may be gainsaid without injury to the image as a whole. It is also global in the sense that it leaves no part of the individual unaffected, wielding complete mastery. It is addressed to reason quite as much as to feeling or will. Nothing subsists outside its domain—not a single point that might serve as the springboard for criticism. It gives to man in his totality a satisfactory image, constituting the kind of pattern

Modern Myths

that permits but one interpretation to whoever is permeated by it. No decisive divergence exists between those who are imbued with the same myth.

Nevertheless, we must distinguish here between the several layers of the myth. The deepest, broadest, and most decisive, which underlies the entire edifice, is perhaps also and at the same time the most passive. More than others, it is impregnated with the communal belief in the values of the group. It likewise calls less directly for action. If it did not exist, the remainder of the myth could not be constructed. It is also the most widely shared; everyone is imbued with it. In addition, it is the most lasting; it evolves simultaneously with the structures of the civilization, is coextensive with the civilization, and disappears only with the civilization itself. To illustrate, we might say that today the two fundamental myths of modern man are history and science. We need not analyze at length here either their origins or their characteristics, which has been done often enough. Let us consider only the bases of all the beliefs, ideologies, actions, and sentiments of twentieth-century man. We find the transmutation of history into a value, which leads to the view that history is the judge of good and evil. Marshal Pétain invoked the maxim, "History will judge." Khrushchev does the same thing when he declares that history will decide between the U.S.S.R. and the United States; this will be a judgment pronounced by God.

Here we are confronted with a significant change. As everyone knows, history has traditionally possessed a sacred meaning. The concern has been not to describe the facts but to extract an instructive, portentous lesson. History was thus one of the myth's instruments. Traditionally, its value was inseparable from its incorporation in a myth. We have changed all that by secularizing history. It now consists in relating events without reference to the eternal, in following their sequence without seeking their meaning—in desanctifying it. But, at the very moment that history is being stripped of its sanctity, we witness the creation of the myth of history as a consequence of a prodigious reversal. It is no longer an integral part of the myth; it has ceased to serve the sacred. It has itself and in itself become a myth. No longer does history possess meaning. Rather, it is now "meaning" in itself and by itself. It is no longer considered associated with the eternal because it contains within itself the quality of the eternal. This, the process by which desanctified man becomes by the same token sacred, is perhaps one of the most remarkable general phenomena of our era.

Belief in the universal capacity of science causes our contemporaries to

plunge into the maddest extrapolations. No one is surprised by Sputnik. We expect much more than that from science. However, we must not dwell merely on the infrastructures, on the foundations of "image-beliefs." At a higher layer of the myth of science, we see, above all, the growth of image-beliefs of work, of technology, of happiness, and of progress. These are certitudes common to all, which the bourgeois and the proletarian share as brothers. The myth of work was undoubtedly of bourgeois origin as we moved on from the notion that work is the punishment and proof of wrongdoing to the conviction that work is virtue and the sign of redemption. This mental mutation between the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries is probably even more fundamental than the industrial revolution which accompanied it. Having achieved power by means of work, the bourgeoisie could hardly regard it as anything but virtue. Because its own further development required an incessantly increasing labor on the part of the proletariat, it was impossible for the bourgeoisie to think of work as anything other than duty and accomplishment. To be sure, this was in no way arbitrary calculation and systematic theorizing but genuine and profound belief. It is myth which confers value, color, and life on that which without it might seem absurd and damnable. "He who works prays." "Idleness is the source of all the vices." These are eminently bourgeois formulas which date from the epoch when work actually became the keystone of society. Thereafter the main concern of the bourgeois family was to choose the occupation that the son would follow. The kind of work to be done decided the course of his early years.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the wage-earners by no means shared this enthusiasm for work. Karl Marx is actually a bourgeois thinker who explains all of history in terms of work, identifying work with well-being in such a way that the latter as a consequence becomes useless. He was an extremely coherent interpreter of the bourgeois myth of work and because he was a socialist, became one of the most active agents in disseminating this myth among the working classes. It was bourgeois spokesmen who talked about the eminent dignity of the worker, but it was Marx who inculcated in the proletariat this henceforth ineradicable conviction. Whereas work became more and more demanding, all the resources of society had to be put at the disposal of "science on the march," which was destined sooner or later to liberate man. Simultaneously, the myth of work spread among the laboring classes. Naturally, this work to which all energies had to be dedicated needed to be just and good, for otherwise life itself, thus completely absorbed by work, would

Modern Myths

cease to have value or rationale. In the process the myth of work became the property of the left. Idleness was the enemy, the outlaw. Only he who worked deserved to live; he alone shared in the building of society. At the end of the nineteenth century the trade unions seriously debated the following question: Was the intellectual a worker, or did that designation properly belong only to whoever toiled with his hands? Today only the worker is deemed to have a sense of responsibility; he alone is worthy and great in our society. And the bourgeoisie, endeavoring to vindicate itself, attempts to show to all the world that it works harder than anyone else. In the people's republics, the idle are condemned and possess neither food cards nor civic rights. Myth compensates for sacrifices and labor demanded by intensive work. It appeases the individual by giving meaning to his life and incites him to put forth more and more effort at all times. Ultimately, it rests on the conviction that, by partaking of science, work is not merely a means of surviving but also a means of existing and of attaining happiness. The need for happiness today permeates man with unprecedented force and preciseness.

This "image-belief" of happiness likewise builds on science. Heretofore blueprints for happiness were invariably based upon individual experience involving the exercise of mind or body and almost always, even in the case of Epicurus, on some sort of discipline. These blueprints have now been replaced by a vision of collective material well-being; happiness assured by the progress of science. Everyone is entitled to it; everyone has been in effect promised it. There is no need for anyone to make sacrifices, acquire an education, reach decisions, or assume responsibility. Happiness is owed to all and consists in a collective increase of wealth, because it is exclusively material in nature. Hence something that had been only a vague dream for the masses and a frantic quest on the part of intellectuals has undergone a complete transformation in our society. It is now a precisely delineated image that can be achieved and that ordains a share for everyone. The myth of happiness is all that enables man to regard life as worth living. Justice, truth, and virtue are swallowed up in the shadow of vanities, effaced by the triumphant conviction that this attainment of happiness is all that matters.

All activity must be subordinated to this exclusive aim: life and the future are envisaged solely from the standpoint of happiness. This myth, we repeat, is exultantly shared by all and universally linked with the development of science. The only difference between Communists and the bourgeoisie lies in the choice of means best suited to confer upon mankind

this plenitude of happiness. The strength of the myth is great enough to legitimize automatically every crime as well as every sacrifice. According to the Communists, if only the bourgeoisie are eliminated, all men will obtain happiness. Similarly, the Nazi officers who entered France in 1940 could say: "We come to bring you happiness." Anyone who challenges this myth, no matter how slightly, is at once looked upon by all his fellows as an enemy of mankind. Do you for a moment doubt that American civilization, which is oriented toward the attainment of happiness, is amply justified for that reason alone? If you do, you are promptly labeled "un-American." Do you doubt that the world's number-one problem is hunger? Do you believe that bliss of eating their fill, conferred upon the masses of India or South America, might very well be purchased at a cost higher than life itself? If you do, you are an enemy of mankind. And if you talk in this vein, the explanation lies in the fact that you are an overfed bourgeois. Here is evidence of the existence of a myth which is invoked to classify as evil anyone who refuses to subscribe to it. These powerful images are obviously associated with the myth of technology, which we shall not discuss here because we have already analyzed it elsewhere.²

This, however, brings us to one of the major myths of our era: the "image-force" of progress. It lies at the junction of the two fundamental beliefs (science and history) and shares equally in both. Science is regarded as necessarily leading us from one advance to another; the rise of this myth coincided in time with the eruption of marvelous inventions that dazzled the men of the nineteenth century. History is viewed as disclosing to us the slow, muffled, mysterious progress of man who, ever since his advent on earth, has been impelled, despite vacillations and even retreats, toward an ever more fully realized and better understood consummation. Liberty and democracy are looked upon as being on the move from the very dawn of history and as reaching their culmination in the nineteenth century. Reason is regarded as being on the march and as triumphant over obscurantism. This victory, embodied in science, was hailed by Auguste Comte. Finally, labor is seen as forging ahead in its incessant struggle against exploitation and as achieving its triumph at the moment of its accord with reality. These are three examples of an identical belief in progress to which, however, different symbols are attached. Should the diversity of these symbols perhaps have awakened some doubt in the minds of the believers? But doubt cannot arise precisely because a myth

2. *La Technique ou l'enjeu du siècle* (Paris: A. Colin, 1954).

Modern Myths

is involved; if the myth were challenged, it would cease to exist, and man, with his blinders removed, would have to face an excruciating reality.

Reference is sometimes made to a belief in progress. This term is inadequate. Although this belief exists, it is accompanied by an exact and rational image which evokes faith and provokes action. The rationality of this attitude consists in the notion that the past as a whole insures progress and that man's recollection of his experience in life demonstrates clearly our ever growing means of action. Such simple experiences, common to everyone and shared by all, must find expression in a single word and must lead toward the future: the past guarantees continuation of this movement, and here the element of belief appears. Teilhard de Chardin typifies this creation of the myth of progress by which he was completely enslaved. But, if we are thus armed with both reason and faith, is it possible for us to remain aloof? Can we refuse to take hold of and be possessed by this movement which seems to be irreversible, this definition of history in terms of ourselves? Such aloofness is all the more impossible because of the growing rapidity of the movement. Progress is not envisioned in terms of millenniums; it is expected to occur within the lifetime of contemporary man. How then can we escape the obligations of taking sides? And how can we take a negative position if this progress is inevitable? Here lies the third component of myth: the impulse toward action. However, myth is likewise characterized by extension from what is to what should be. The kind of progress we can clearly demonstrate is that of machines, of technology, and of the totality of material means. Palpably less certain is the progress of institutions. As for the progress of man within himself, it is probably non-existent. His intelligence and his virtue do not seem much greater today than they were four or five thousand years ago. The most we can say is that we know nothing about it. Yet man, precisely because he is permeated by the myth of progress, thinks he knows. He knows with complete certainty that the progress of man accompanies material progress and that inventions attest his increased intelligence and his greater conformity to objective reality. He has to feel this way. Otherwise, he might fall victim to total catastrophe.

Everyone believes that contemporary man is better, more intelligent, more capable of effective behavior, than the Athenian of the fifth century. And, if we extend our gaze into the future, we feel sure that the man of tomorrow will be endowed with everything he may need in order to resolve problems which we today are incapable of doing. Thus progress not only exists but is inflexibly good; it has improved man and will con-

tinue to do so. What madness it would be, then, to consider judging or opposing it! Myth always enables those who are imbued with it to judge from their arrogant heights whoever remains outside, looking on. Nowadays anyone who entertains doubts on the subject of progress is subjected to the most fierce and contemptuous condemnation by all political groups, of the right as well as of the left. It is important to remember in this connection that only by virtue of an outmoded tradition is the term "reactionary" still applied to the right wing. The latter, like everyone else, believes in progress, but under somewhat different labels—progress toward the spiritual, toward individualism, toward what is human. After all, it should not be forgotten that the bourgeoisie started the myth of progress. And so, if left-wingers, invoking one of the embodiments of the myth of progress, can accuse their adversaries of wanting to return to the liberal nineteenth century, the right can, by the same token, accuse the Communists of wanting to bring about a far worse regression: a return to the totally integrated society of primitive times. Consequently, these are family quarrels. Both sides invoke history to which they give the same name: progress. This concrete act of faith obliterates all problems except those of means. This decisive myth is flanked by others which likewise rest on the foundation of history. Of these we can discern two that are particularly obvious and active: the nation and youth.

We might perhaps deal briefly with the myth of the nation—it has been so often analyzed, denounced, and criticized. Unfortunately, this provides us with proof that denunciation of the myth does not suffice to exorcize it. And, within a country which seemed to have eradicated it, we see it resurging with considerable vigor. We should note only that this myth of the nation (which transforms the phenomenon of nationalism into a value) appeared at the very moment when awareness of history arose, when, in fact, history became reason, justice, truth, the high judge, and the source of emancipation. It was then that the nation, the instrument of history, found itself clothed with a dignity which served to crystallize political sentiment, emptied by the crises of the eighteenth century, into religious fervor. The nation thus became an object of faith, the prerequisite of action, the criterion of good and evil. Everything that benefited the nation was good. In addition, the nation was an expression of progress. There was exultation in having left behind that vain epoch when there were no nations, those dark eras that could be designated only as intermediate ones, as so many lost centuries, as a middle period: the Middle

Modern Myths

Ages. The left invented the national myth. It had to offset the plethora of myths such as order and monarchy possessed by the right.

The nation, as the very image of progress, presented a challenge to the men of the right. Once triumphant, and enthroned in society, it became an agent of order, of European as well as domestic stability. At that point the right wing annexed this myth. Here we have an amusing oscillation which soon led the defenders of the myth to oppose its creators, who in the meanwhile had become not antinationalists but internationalists, thereby in the last analysis consecrating the unimpeachable nation. Such oscillation has often been discussed. An example of it occurred in France in 1943, when nationalism again became the appanage of the left. In actuality, however, like every good and genuine myth, the nation had never quartered itself exclusively in one particular camp. The only exception was in 1793, in its embryonic stage. Thereafter, we observe the development of parallel myths, and in 1943 Pétain was no less nationalist than Thorez. Each merely claimed to represent the authentic expression of the myth.

The most recent embodiment of this myth is to be found in the contention, frequently reiterated in connection with the Indochinese, Moroccan, and Algerian crises, that the nation is a necessary stage through which peoples must go in order to attain their majority. Here is a delectable prostitution of thought, a curious need, in an era when intellectuals are despised, to advance in all seriousness, under cover of sociology and political science, theories designed to justify passionate opinions. Where, in what way, and when has it been necessary for civilizations to go through the "national stage"? How has the nation ever played a formative, educative, maturing role, conducive in any way to the emancipation of mankind? Everything we know demonstrates the opposite. But passion would have been unable to assert itself to any great degree without experiencing the need for parascientific justification were it not for the fact that its object was a myth which, even within its own religious domain, invariably seeks to don a rational garb.

As myth of history, the nation is always accompanied by the myth of youth. Civilizations turned toward the past have boasted the myth of the old man. We have changed a good deal, and this change is in itself fraught with profound meaning. But the identity of this universally similar youth strips of all savor the discourse which eulogizes it. Resting on a rational basis, because this youth represents the maximum of working strength, of capacity for growth, and of fighting prowess, the myth cannot stop there. To be sure, young people are needed in a period of exuberant technologi-

cal progress, for they alone can adapt themselves to this incessant process of innovation. It is likewise true that scientific research requires an always newly recruited—hence youthful—personnel and that the necessity of increasing production demands an increasing number of young people. But from this obvious truth the argument moves in all seriousness to that familiar tautologism: youth commands the future, which involves automatically a reference to the myths of progress and happiness. I wish it were realized how closely knit our mythology shows itself to be. Actually, this is a characteristic of every mythology; myths reinforce, explain, and supplement each other. The nation is created by and for youth, and youth is the motive power of progress.

The only true countenance that can be shown to the world is that of youth. It alone inspires confidence and friendliness. A political regime which displays such prepossessing young people simply must be good. The countenance of youth is identical on the cover of *Life*, *Match*, and the R.D.A. magazine, just as it was the same on the cover of Communist and Nazi reviews, and on the Fascist and American magazines of twenty years ago. Everywhere youth is the same; everywhere it is photographed in the same way and exploited for the same causes. Everywhere and always it corresponds to the same myth. We ourselves were this youth. Absolutely nothing has happened during the past two generations that can be adduced to justify the myth, but it does not need material proofs to keep on growing. Despite the contradiction supplied by the facts of the case, the myth of youth possesses more vitality today than it had previously. The yesterdays that gladden us are obviously those of youth. Whenever one of civilization's problems seems insoluble, someone proceeds to tell us: "Yes, but youth is on the way." Youth will do whatever we are incapable of doing. Poor youth! All this adds up to a convenient way of getting free from these young people by nailing them to a myth from which they no longer have the right to separate themselves. They must without fail perform their role by assuming the burden of our hopes—fitting themselves, therefore, into the prearranged mold. At the very instant when youth becomes the servant of all sociopolitical structures, it is raised either jestingly or by way of compensation to the level of a myth, and the old men proclaim that they believe in it. As a matter of fact, they do.

III

The myths we have just described are definitively the real motivating and psychological foundations of our civilization. They are obviously not to

Modern Myths

be confused with ideologies, because they are not primarily or basically political or politicized. They express the very existence of the collective and universal civilization in which we live. In them we contemplate our own image—our future. We will ourselves, we mirror ourselves, in this way. And, if we confine ourselves to our own epoch, it seems that there are definitely no other myths than these. Apart from the important themes, there is little or no value in what we have called "myths." However, the term is applied to almost everything either because it is sufficiently vague and pretentious to accord with journalistic style or because it represents an inexact analysis of contemporary civilization that leads one to speak of the Marxist myth or the liberal, nationalist, or imperial myth. In any case, we have indicated that different levels of analysis do exist. To be more precise, the essential myths we have briefly described condition, in turn, the lesser images; these are composed of secondary myths (as are all the religious myths of antiquity), which possess their own individuality but exist only in terms of the essential myth. The secondary myths are definitely mere facets of the major image; they cause it to shine, lend it color, and give it actuality and a renewed vitality without which it would have no power. Thus we could enumerate (and each one would require an explanation) the myth of the dam and the machine, or hygiene and health, the myth of the bourgeois, of revolution, myths of justice and peace, of the actor, star, or hero, and the myth of gasoline as well as the myth of productivity. There are many others. Marxism, for instance, belongs with these examples, these actualizations. It is not one of the essential myths of our times but a secondary and far more superficial and temporary image. It exists only to the extent that modern man is radically imbued with the image-beliefs of work, progress, technology, and so forth. These image-beliefs assure its spread, and, at the same time—this is the distinctive role of secondary myths—it lends them warmth and passion. Marxism constitutes nothing but a manifestation of these profound forces. To be sure, it expresses them only in part; however, if it seems to be more satisfactory than any other ideology, the reason is to be found in the fact that despite everything it expresses them better than any other current formulation. Besides, it would be idle to try to ascertain how these secondary myths spring up or spread. Their creational mechanism in no way explains their appearance. Their cause, and likewise the source of their strength, is precisely the need to express, in the realm of actuality, basic myths which, instead of emerging as they really are, must (the very nature of myth requires this) constantly disguise themselves. The reason for this lies in the fact that the

external trappings of the myth rapidly wear away and consequently have to be renewed and refreshed.

This explains why a description of those embellishments—brilliant today, tarnished and forsaken tomorrow—is disappointing; for, if the permanent significance which they possess is not perceived, sooner or later it must be admitted that what one mistook for myth is merely a ridiculous story which nobody believes any more. Reality provides us with endless examples because the detail is constantly renewed. The myth of hygiene, based on those of youth and happiness, finds ulterior expression in soap powders and detergents. The myth of the hero, which rests on those of progress and fatherland, takes shape in James Dean or the abbé Pierris. Here we have merely the result of accidents and coincidences. But one must pass on quickly to the next thing, because myth cannot remain for long fixed within its formal, reinvigorating embodiment, only to become, in the end, disappointing and commonplace.

We might, of course, be assailed by misgivings, asking ourselves if the collective image-beliefs which we have attempted to define are really myths in, let us say, the technical sense of the term. This question is not entirely devoid of interest, given the deep-rootedness of myths and their essential role in the life of man. If we visualize the manner in which image-beliefs are formed, we can indeed affirm that from this point of view they are closely akin to the myth. But we have demonstrated precisely that this phenomenon cannot be characterized by the way it comes into being. Nor does the fact that an idea is shared by a large number of people suffice to make it a myth. Rather, the determinant is a certain structure, a certain function, a certain meaning. Can we, by comparing image-belief to ancient myths, and after noting, to begin with, the vital difference, discover some kinship between them? One thing is certain from the start: myth cannot be individual or personal. Rather, it must describe an instructive and universal action. Face to face with myth, man has no choice but to acknowledge a truth that determines a structure of the real and, at the same time, one form of human conduct. Action as expressed in myth, reality as revealed by it and transported to the level of truth, must be reiterated, just as it is embodied in the hero of the myth.

Actually, this first ensemble of characteristics is exactly reproduced by the image-beliefs we have described. All of them disclose essential structures of the real as revealed to man not as such but as truth and considered as truth. They describe actions that are rigorously exemplary—work, nation, the quest for happiness, progress. These are precisely the only ones

Modern Myths

which, in these times, inspire "histories" (the detailed myths we have just mentioned), and which are incarnated in heroes. As a matter of fact, all myth is embodied in heroes who have appeal for everyone, whose history is meaningful and symbolic, universal and instructive. But, in order to ascertain the extent to which these image-beliefs are myths, we must remember who the heroes (using the oldest connotation of the term) are of our own era: the hero of work (the Stakhanovist—or the worker), the hero of the nation (the warrior, the Unknown Soldier), the hero of the cinema (the eternal juvenile lead, the ever-new conqueror of love), the hero of science (the unknown scholar, the human guinea-pig-man, humanity's benefactor). These heroes, who inflexibly demand imitation, determine our myths with exactitude. And we recognize in them still another characteristic of the traditional myth: they address themselves to the whole man, who takes on the appearance of myth. Indeed, these heroes are simultaneously vision, image, representation—then belief, the adherence of heart and soul to this certitude regarding our progress or our work—and next, idea, thought, and even doctrine. For is not all this based upon reason? And, finally, they debouch into action, inciting men to an active imitation of the hero.

No part of modern man remains neutral or indifferent in these myths—even as in the commencement of history by the great religious myths. Why religious? It seems accurate to say that one of the principal functions of myth was to permit the abolition of time and space. To be more exact, man, gripped by the anguish of the times, adhered to a myth that enabled him to master time and to share in a "glorious period." At first glance, our image-beliefs do not seem to be of this type, and yet they conform to the same role. More than in any previous epoch, Western man is now excruciatingly aware of the passage of time and of the irreversibility of history. Long before Valéry, and without the necessity of intervention by a great thinker, nineteenth-century man came to realize that all fate was historical. But modern myths answer to that particular anxiety (and not to the perhaps different one of the Greek or Semite); it is precisely that era whose mastery and, in a certain sense, whose abolition they make possible.

The fact that the myth of progress represents precisely the appropriation of history by man for the service of man is probably the greatest success ever scored by a myth. The myth of nation (which cannot help but be necessary and eternal) and the myth of happiness properly constitute the roads to participation in a glorious destiny which lies beyond time and in which we share inasmuch as it is both reality and promise. Thus every-

thing seems to find its locus exactly at the very center of these creations of the modern mentality. Actually, all this is merely the response in mythical terms to the new situation which has been thrust upon man. But this launches us into a complicated discussion.

It is customary to think that, because man's essential situation has always been identical ever since his remote beginnings, his reactions should be similar and the myths created five, six, or ten thousand years ago, which are inscribed in the profoundest depths of our being, should remain within us immutable archetypes incapable of renovation. At the most they might assume some new form, provided that they contained mythical precedents. To us, on the contrary, it seems that during the past one hundred and fifty years, the alteration of milieu in which man is called upon to live is such that, for the first time since the beginning of the historical era, the situation has changed. And just as the great mutation ushered in by fire and iron produced its myths, so the change we know today is destined to be inscribed in the most profound recesses of man in the guise of myths, apparently both defensive and explanatory. Thus these myths exhibit characteristics identical with those of the origins of humanity or civilization; but, of necessity, they also present new ones. Like all myths, they show us that something has completely revealed itself, that an event which is decisive for each and all of us has really occurred. Like all myths, they explain how it happened. This is enough. It takes the place of a fully satisfactory analysis and replaces the "why." Myths of work, of progress, and of nation have no other rationale and are in some manner revealers of a mystery. But the origin to which these myths allude is no longer the same, and this is likewise true of the event which they interpret. For us it is no longer the origin of the world and man, for that has ceased to be a real question for the man of today. Nor is it the origin of the gods: the traditional gods are definitely dead. It is no longer the phenomenon of fire or of the city. The origin, the advent, which haunts men, which enchants and obsesses them at the same time, is that of the machine. It is electricity, the mastery of nature, abundance.

It can certainly be said that, if the myth is invariably a return to the zero point, that point is not always the same. Today our zero point in the Western world is to be found in the period around 1780, that marvelous era when all the latent forces of nature were to be unleashed by a sort of magic for the benefit of man. The myths of work, progress, and nation repeatedly reiterate to us "how" this happened. They make us relive this innovation and enable us to share in its efflorescence. And this takes the

Modern Myths

place of "why" and of every justification. But at the same time they show us that this was really an inception and not the consummation. Here we have the difference, which is perhaps unique, between these myths and those of tradition. The former involve exclusively a return to the past: perfection is always to be found in a previous era, with decline having occurred in the interim. On the other hand, our myths place perfection in the future, as the certain consummation of the past. The modern myth is one which permits the simultaneity of inception and consummation. It guarantees the latter by means of the former and presupposes, more pronouncedly today than in the past, the total participation of the individual. For this no longer involves us in a simple recommencement but rather in a plenitude superior to that of the beginning, for which everyone is, in some degree, responsible. Projection into the future renders the myth still more active, constraining, and satisfactory than the primitive myth, while assuring it a still greater mastery over time.

To be sure, when we speak of a zero point, we do not intend to convey that these modern myths are completely new and severed from traditional, mythical elements. We could easily find mythical precedence for these resurrected images. The myth of *Paradise Lost*, which we will rediscover at the end of time, is directly related with the myths of progress and happiness. The myth of youth derives some of its roots from the myth of the young god, the bearer of hope, who is always sacrificed. The myth of the nation is related to the myths of the founders of cities and of power. But this is not particularly enlightening for us, since the real question is not what elements of the traditional myths have been able to survive. It is, rather, what has replaced them in our world, what image-forces today serve man as a means of seeking to explain himself and in virtue of which he acts. The quest merely outlined here reveals to us, at the same time, what it is that conditions the actions of man today and what it is that may take hold of him. It also reveals to us the future which he visualizes and which may well become our future because our myths oblige us to build it in this fashion.

THE RENAISSANCE AND THE SOURCES OF THE MODERN SOCIAL SCIENCES

I. FORMATION OF THE NEW SCIENCE

1. *The Development of Comparative Thought*

The possibility of the development of comparative thought made the Renaissance an era particularly favorable to the awakening of the scientific understanding of social phenomena. Isolated elements of such an attitude had already appeared, but now their accumulation became of decisive importance.

The leading role was played especially by the progress of rationalist thought first in Italy, then successively in all countries of Europe. The essential value of this thought consists in an appeal to human reason as the supreme tribunal in controversies and studies of nature and society and not merely—as Busson states it—in “the application of rational methods to religious matters, to the exclusion of faith”;¹ and, at the same time, in the

Translated by James H. Labadie.

1. Henri Busson, *Les Sources et le développement du rationalisme dans la littérature française de la Renaissance (1533-1601)* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1922), p. xi.

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

search for rational premises of phenomena and in the judgment of these phenomena from the point of view of the *ratio*.

An important role was also played by the treatment of problems from the historical point of view, that is, in regard to their development in time. The factors contributing to the ever increasing application of these methods became more numerous, and this consequently led to more profound developments in comparative thought.

Among these factors must first be mentioned economic changes and especially the general evolution toward primitive capitalism. The varying intensity of these changes in the different countries is well known, as well as the curve of their transformations, which shows a heterogeneous form as demonstrated, for example, by Alfred von Martin in his analysis of the case of Florence.² Nevertheless, the possibility of comparisons between the old rural economy, based on the possession of land and therefore static, and the new dynamic urban economy, drew attention to a certain number of phenomena, such as the increasing importance of money and of time. Italian clocks now sounded each hour, and Vespasiano da Bisticci, as well as other authors of biographies (*vitae*), stressing the positive traits of his hero, writes that, among other things, he "valued time highly, nor did he waste so much as an hour, notwithstanding all his occupations with affairs of state and with private concerns."

Social changes, closely linked to the displacement of the economic center of gravity from the great landed properties to the cities, stimulated liberal and democratic movements (now in the broadest sense, *Stadtluft mache frei*).

In Italy the urban republics, representing a temporary step toward the princely regime, demonstrate social changes in all their breadth. These changes permit comparison in two possible cases—when the author criticizes the past and offers the example of the new "*virtù*" and when he criticizes modern times by showing in the ancestral custom the ideal of daily behavior.

Criticism of the slow pace of ancestors, of the inactivity and debauchery of the clergy, and (especially in the north) of the idle and licentious life of the court are results of comparing the intense activity of contemporaries with the remains of an *ancien régime* become an anachronism.

The incarnation of the ideals of the new epoch in the *virtuoso*, that is,

2. Alfred von Martin, "Von der florentinischer Bürgerrepublik zu dem Principat Lorenzos," in *Soziologie der Renaissance* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1932), p. 85. English ed., *Sociology of the Renaissance* (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1944).

the "master of his trade," led to an appreciation of value through a comparison of the particular potentialities of each one with those of other virtuosos, calling forth intellectual competition similar to the commercial competition. The virtuoso works no longer "for the greater glory of God" but for his own glory, now measured in money. Hence come reflections on the lucrative nature of the various professions: the complaints of the philosophers who are "rich in wisdom, poor in money" (Benedetto Accolti) and a preference for the life of the jurist who unites "wisdom" and "eloquence."

Thus virtuosity, rivaling even the privileges of "high birth," became the touchstone of social value: during the funeral of Filippino Lippi (1504) all the shops of the Via de' Servi in Florence were closed, a privilege that had previously been reserved for the funerals of princes. Along with these transformations there developed an abundant literature on two modes of life, the active and the contemplative. These reflections generally resulted in a compromise. Rinuccini declares: "The fact that there are two kinds of happiness reveals to us two conditions of living."

The movements of the Reformation contributed—especially in the northern countries—to basic transformations in the mentality of men. From the time that the doctrine of the Catholic church ceased to constitute a monopoly and as soon as the anathema lost its effectiveness as an instrument in the liquidation of "inner" controversies, men did their best on both sides of the barricade to assemble the most valued arguments.

Catholics now compared "heretical" doctrines with the obligatory dogmas of the church; Protestants examined the deviations of official Catholic doctrine from its old dogmatic and constitutional principles. Current controversy about the role of Catholicism and Protestantism in the history of the sciences³ should stress, I feel, not the "statistical" arguments (the number of representatives of one camp or the other in the domains of the individual sciences) but rather the genesis and process of development of the sciences taken as a whole; and precisely this consideration indicates to us that it was critical thought against dogmas that played the chief driving role. The weakening of the monopoly of Catholic doctrine also gave birth to a typical tendency of the time, consisting of a comparison of the various religions in the hope of finding—after surmounting secondary dogmatic controversies—the common religion. Nicholas of

3. R. Hooykaas, "Science and Reformation"; R. H. Bainton, "Critical Comment"; R. Hooykaas, "Answer to Dr. Bainton's Comment on Science and Reformation"; F. Russo, "Rôle respectif du Catholicisme et du Protestantisme dans le développement des sciences aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* (Paris), No. 1 (1956) and Nos. 3 and 4 (1957).

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

Cusa wrote: "The concord of religions is established therefore in the heaven of reason." The same opinions may be found in Fricius Modrevius and the "irenists."

Antiquity played a decisive role as the element which opened new horizons of the mind, thanks to a broadening of "perspective" allowing a more profound comparison of the present with the past. Since that time we find not only the habitual comparison of "new" with "old" (in Rabelais, for example: "I see brigands, butchers and adventurers of the present time more learned than the doctors and preachers of my own time") but also the perpetual presence of a third element, antiquity, which exerted an influence on the reasoning of writers. It was especially significant in Italy, where Roman antiquity has been treated as an essential part of the national tradition, which must be continued. At the time of the Renaissance each poet, philosopher, cavalier, or artist was compared not only with his immediate predecessors but also with the Greeks and the Romans (Homer, Ovid, etc.). Filippo Villani, in his collection of biographies of Florentine artists and scholars toward the middle of the fourteenth century, notes, for example, that the geometer and astronomer Pagolo "surpassed all the ancients and moderns in the scale of astronomical achievement."⁴ The very notions and names of the "Renaissance" and the "Middle Ages" originated in the comparison of "new" and "ancient" times.

Ideals of the future often arose from a comparison of reality with the more or less ancient past. As a result of the confrontation of the brilliant past of ancient Rome with its miserable current state (Petrarch: "Lo, the Italian soil is now shaken by barbarian violence"), writers sought the union of the nation as a supreme aim and attempted to find remedies for current evils. The ideals sketched in utopian schemes, notably in More's *Utopia*, also served as examples. The comparison of the present, which always leaves a great deal to be desired, with the possibilities of an idealized future, again served as a premise for the development of the social sciences.

Comparisons were made not only of the phenomena which take place in time but also of those which occur in space. The activity and the curiosity of the men of the Renaissance are evidenced also in the numerous voyages. A change of milieu enables one to observe his native institutions from a certain remove and thus to see the facts more distinctly. Consequently, the literature of that epoch (first expressed in correspondence)

4. Filippo Villani, *Le Vite d'uomini illustri fiorentini* (Firenze: S. Coen, 1847), p. 45; same comparison made about Coluccio (p. 20), Giotto (p. 47), etc.

contains many firsthand observations. This also explains the large role played by geography and the popularity of such eminent works of Glareanus' *On Geography* and Matthias de Miechovia's *Treatise on the two Sarmatias*. Geographic discoveries did much to broaden the possibilities of comparison. Montaigne, for example, wrote about cannibals, basing his judgment on the opinion of a man "who had lived for ten or twelve years in that other world which was discovered in our century." He notes, concerning the morals of the cannibals: "From what I have heard of that nation, I can see nothing barbarous or uncivilized about it, except that we all call barbarism that which does not fit in with our usages."

2. *The Empirical and Rationalist Attitude*

Concrete examples from the Renaissance era show a joining of the empirical with the rationalist attitude, typical for the natural sciences and somewhat rare in the social sciences. Several writers of the time underscore distinctly the role of observation linked to the critical analysis of economic, political, and social relations. Thus, for example, Erasmus of Rotterdam stresses his lack of confidence in whatever he has not seen with his own eyes ("I prefer first to see with my own eyes rather than with those of others"); Francesco Vettori separates examples acquired in books (Persia, Assyria, Rome, etc.) from those drawn from experience ("all the republics which I have known of through history or which I have seen") and, giving priority to the latter, declares in his *Summary of the History of Italy* that, "to speak frankly, all governments are tyrannical."⁵ In France Carolus Bovillus (Charles de Bouelles) wrote in his *Liber de sapiente* (1510) that "only reason is the mature and perfect daughter of nature."⁶

In Poland, Fričius Modrevius applied reason (*ratio*) as a criterion to most of the relationships which he observed closely, declaring them good or bad from that point of view. In his works he appealed to the "tribunal of reason" which, together with experience (to him the best teacher),⁷ became the element establishing the necessity of human interference in the sphere of social life.

5. Numerous examples may be found in E. Garin's anthology *Il Rinascimento italiano* (Milan, 1941).

6. Quoted in E. Cassirer's *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (Leipzig and Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1927).

7. *Experientia ipsa rerum magistra—De Republica, liber de schola*, chap. iv. The first edition appeared in Cracow in 1551, the next two at Basel in 1554 and 1559 (German translation, Basel, 1557). The latest edition was published in Warsaw by the Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy in 1953 (Vol. I of the *Opera omnia*).

3. *The Dynamic Conception of Social Life*

There remains to be mentioned the tendency to conceive the character of social life in a historical and dynamic fashion. Lorenzo Valla wrote: "So far as I am able to judge, more gravity, more prudence, more civil wisdom are displayed in historical orations than in the precepts of any philosopher."

This question was elaborated in all its aspects,⁸ but from our point of view it must not be forgotten that the supremacy of history was linked to a definite attitude of the author, especially to criticism or moral appreciation; that is, to the praise or condemnation of personalities and events. We can, for example, find in Johannis Bruti's *On the Praises of History* the idea that the historian is "the arbiter as it were of the whole world."

This attitude was closely linked to the subjective selection of facts, for the historian notes especially those events which, according to him, are worth retaining in the reader's memory. Filippo Villani, for example, declared: "My uncle John and my father Matthew endeavored to write down in the vulgar tongue what had happened worthy of memory in various periods. I shall construct something, which will certainly not be very beautiful, but such that important facts will not perish."⁹

Thus developed, the historic sense plays a double role. On the one hand, it gives arguments in discussions of all kinds—for example, Michel Servet, combating the dogma of the Trinity, wrote that this dogma was no doubt useful and necessary in the past but that it had become useless and ripe for rejection.¹⁰ On the other hand, it enables one to conceive human progress as a process in the perpetual perfecting of human thought, and Villani, who was quoted above, states that the facts amassed in his work "are confined to those which best and most aptly describe the material utilized."¹¹

8. On the development of historical thought consult H. Baron, "Das Erwachen des historischen Denkens in Humanismus des Quattrocento," *Historische Zeitschrift*, CXLVII (1932/1933), 5 ff.

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

10. D. Cantimori, *Eretici italiani del Cinquecento* (Firenze: G. C. Sansoni, 1939), p. 40. The "Polish brethren," on their side, regard religion as an ensemble of principles which undergo perpetual evolution. Georges Schomann, in his will, told his children that they must be faithful to their paternal religion but that, if after his death a more perfect religion were to arise, they should not hesitate to recognize it (*Bibliotheca antitrinitariorum sive catalogus scriptorum Christophori Sandii* [Freistadt, 1684], pp. 196-97).

In his *Sylvae* (1590), Fricius wrote that Luther had eliminated part of the errors, that after him it was Zwingli who had eliminated another part, but that in the future what remained would also be considered as erroneous.

11. *Op. cit.*, p. 54.

Garin correctly observed that history became "the supreme world tribunal," as it is for us today, and the source of information on the social and intellectual life of the past. In this way history is not only mistress of life but also witness of life.

4. *Eagerness for Novelty*

Intellectual curiosity was markedly characteristic of the men of the Renaissance. They were, as César des Gaulois wrote, "eager for new things." Conjointly with economic, social, and political tendencies, it was precisely this curiosity which was the motive force for dynamics and initiative of all kinds.

Dante Alighieri blames the Florentines for the perpetual change of opinions and political institutions, condemning it as a morbid symptom (*Purgatorio*, V, 145 ff.). Aeneas Silvius wrote: "Italy, rejoicing in novelty, has no stability." And Petrarch, recommending travel, protested against the identification of constancy with inertia. He observed: "If there is anyone who place virtue, not in the mind, but in localities and calls immobility constancy, people afflicted with gout ought to seem constant to him; but the dead are even more constant" (*Ep. fam.*, XV, ep. iv). And Montaigne remarks (I, 25): "What a poor, paltry competence is a mere bookish competence!" He emphasizes: "To this end human intercourse is marvelously well adapted, as well as travel in foreign countries . . . to report chiefly on the intellectual characteristics and the manners of those nations, and to rub and file our brains in contact with those of others. . . . I should wish that he might be taken abroad in his early childhood."

However, this pursuit of novelty—characteristic, as we have seen, of Montaigne himself, a writer of conservative mind—did not constitute an end in itself. The reason for the phenomenon, today called "the desire for novelty," lies in the impossibility of expressing one's self in inherited terms and in the impossibility of accepting an existing previous state of affairs. New events give rise to new ideas and to new thoughts directed toward the future.

5. *The Tendencies of Scientific Thought*

Quite independent of knowledge of the immediate cause for the formation of various concepts among writers (economic and social changes, stressed by Karl Marx; moral and ethical problems, by Max Weber; artistic questions brought to the forefront by D. Frey), modern scientific

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

thought has since its origins shown several principal directions in its interests.

As early as the close of the fifteenth century the wisdom contained in the "book of nature" had been opposed to the "book of knowledge" of the erudite humanists. Despite the complaints of several writers, who argued the impossibility of scientific research in the absence of a rich collection of books (Coluccio Salutati wrote, for example, that he saw no possibility of discussion "in so great a dearth of books"), we can observe simultaneously an obvious lassitude provoked by the excess of bookish knowledge. Poggio Bracciolini declared: "I have become a little more tepid in this solicitude to search for new books." He also noted the unfavorable aspects of this sort of knowledge when he wrote: "For to assemble wood, stones, and cement endlessly can seem extremely stupid, if you never construct anything out of them."

Tomasso Campanella, forgetful of the role played by the erudite humanists, such as Gasin, severely attacked the erudition of Pico della Mirandola in terms which permit us to stress the total opposition between two different scientific attitudes: "This is the difference, then, between my way of philosophizing and that of Pico; and I learn more from the anatomy of an ant or of an herb . . . than from all the books that have been written since the beginning of the century." Leonardo da Vinci detested the interminable and sterile discussions of the humanists. According to him, no human investigation deserves to be called truly scientific unless it has passed the proof of mathematical investigation. The same point of view was later represented by Galileo, who said that philosophy should be deciphered in the book of nature, written "in the mathematical language."

Drawing its origin from these sources, the preponderance of the "exact sciences" which left a decisive mark on the style of modern scientific reflection ("qualitative" thought—that is, the utilization of categories such as "man," which imply other qualitative categories such as "mortal,") became insufficient and yielded to "quantitative" thought. This is the genesis of a phenomenon which Abel Rey called "the mathematics of the Renaissance."

Although constructed later "in the geometric order," the science of man and of society remained faithful for several years (despite some remarkable exceptions) to deductive speculation. It cannot claim to possess a John the Baptist of the Renaissance, and this is why the reconstruction of its origins requires the analysis of several fields of man's intellectual production.

II. THE ELEMENTS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE IN HISTORIOGRAPHY

Before the first history courses were introduced into universities at the beginning of the sixteenth century, historical thought had developed in several types of works: *historiae*, *comentarii*, and *vitae*. Although we find in them only chance and incoherent reflections on social, economic, and political life, the attentive reader may nevertheless discover from time to time an image of the reality in which the author lived. In France and in England several historical works of this sort may be found, but it was Italian historiography which contributed most to the formation of the premises of social science.¹²

The Florentine chronicles of the three Villanis (Giovanni, Matteo, and Filippo) contain not only—as do all historical works of the time—information on political history but also some considerations on the social and economic life of the Florentines. Giovanni Villani is proud of his native city: speaking of the “grandeur and authority and magnificence of the commune of Florence,” he states the total number of inhabitants, the number of men capable of bearing arms, the proportion of wealthy people to common people, the number of foreigners, schools, and monks, and structure of the corporations and their relation to each other, and so on (esp. XI, 94).

As first treated by the chronicler as a uniform whole “the people of Florence” (that is, “the Florentines”) become more and more heterogeneous when he describes social upsets; we see, on the one hand, the “common people” or “inferior people” and, on the other hand, the “nobles” or “the great.” Upsets such as earthquakes, floods, poor harvests, and counterfeiting give the writer occasion to communicate to his readers information on the monetary system (XIII, 53 and 97) or on the prices of articles of necessity (XII, 73), and so on.

Thus Villani draws his readers' attention to social or economic affairs only when they become mobile (in other words, when things are no longer following their normal course). This was the characteristic trait of historians of the time: it is sufficient to point out the description of the “tumult of the simpletons” at Florence by Gino Capponi (*History of the Republic of Florence*, IV, 1) and Bernardino Corio's description of the troubles caused at Milan by the expulsion of the monks from the monastery of Sant'Ambrogio.¹³

12. J. W. Thompson, *A History of Historical Writing* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1942), and W. K. Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948).

13. *L'Historia di Milano volgarmente scritta* (Vinegia, 1554) (1st ed.; Milan, 1503).

It has been the habit since the time of Burckhardt to deplore the fact that history, until then the profession of chroniclers, fell into the hands of the humanists, who left the imprint of a moralizing eloquence upon historical works. Today the difference between any work's form and its substance is stressed. This is why it may be said that Lionardo Bruni, for example, like other humanists of the first rank, kept his independence in the face of the authorities of antiquity¹⁴ as well as that of his direct master, Villani. Bruni re-examined facts and compared them with other data from contemporary chronicles and documents,¹⁵ always carefully observing the "societies of people" (VII, IX). It must also be noted that in the last three books of his *History* (covering the years 1390-1402) we find almost exclusively the authentic observations of the author, who, as an eye-witness of events (he was born in 1370), has rejected every intermediary.

Among the historians who may attract our attention, special mention must be made of Machiavelli and Guicciardini. As early as the Introduction to the *History of Florence*, Machiavelli, demonstrating his own interpretation of history and his relationships with contemporaries, writes that his predecessors have left nothing but descriptions of wars, remaining silent on internal affairs. In consideration of this deficiency, Machiavelli announces that his principal aim will be to show the genesis of the "grave and natural enmities" which always exist between "the men of the people and the nobles."¹⁶

This was more than an intention; he always, in fact, analyzed with precision the essence of the political and social struggle and noted, among other things, that it resulted in the inevitable formation of opposition in the victorious side. After analyzing the results of the "popular party's" triumph in Rome and Florence, he states that the degeneration of the Florentine patricians after the defeat was the consequence of the fact that they—desiring to regain the important role which they had formerly played—attempted "not only to be but to seem like the populace in their government, in their soul, and in their way of life" (pp. 138-39).

Machiavelli particularly noted that the men who possess the power never cease to tremble before the "mobile soul of the plebeians" (p. 274). This is not, naturally, a flattering observation, but it does present precisely

14. P. O. Kristeller, *The Classics and Renaissance Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 19.

15. E. Santini's Introduction in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* (Città di Castello: S. Lapi, 1914), XIX, iii.

16. *Opere istoriche e politiche di Nicolò Machiavelli*, I, ix, 146, and 161.

a characteristic trait of plebeians, who, pursuing a change in their unfavorable situation, show constant proof, unlike the nobles in their conservative, "static" position, of their perpetual mobility. Among other opinions of his contemporaries, Machiavelli transmitted to us a fragment of an interesting address by a representative of the "plebeian men," stating that faithful slaves will always remain slaves and that "good men" will always remain poor. This will continue until the time when slaves become "unfaithful and bold" and the poor "rapacious and bold," indicating to us what directions some of the chiefs wished the "mobility" of the plebeians to take. This example is sufficient to show that it was Machiavelli's penetrating observation—and he often stressed the decisive role of experience as a criterion of an understanding of the facts—which gave good results.

Guicciardini's opinions resulted from the experience of a disappointed politician and from a conflict between reality and ideals which—as he well knew—would not soon be realized (*Ricordi*, p. 236). Recording his thoughts after the decline of his career he assumed—like his friend Machiavelli—the attitude of an observer of human affairs and rejected everything which hindered the attainment of that aim: books, dogmas, and the reflections of authorities who then enjoyed universal consideration. Thus, the image of reality which arises from his works is clear and concrete and, at the same time, bears the stamp of a certain coldness and dryness. Guicciardini sees the facts with a penetrating eye—conveyed by the reading of just a few pages of his *Relazione di Spagna*, written for his own use at the time when he was ambassador at the court of the king of Spain in Madrid. This narrative contains especially detailed information on the economic, social, and political conditions of the country. The author takes into consideration the habits, civilization, and culture of the Spanish. The conclusions drawn from these observations, and the observations themselves, have been confirmed by the scientific research of present-day scholars who closely compared the reports of Guicciardini with those of contemporary chroniclers and travelers.¹⁷

Experience—in a broad sense of the term—constitutes the basis of his opinions, and discernment in the real situation provides—in his opinion—the basis for reasonable and effective action. Knowing that the power of the Florentine republic had been founded by the bourgeoisie, he wished to cede power to the wealthy patricians, for he had understood "that in a

17. André Otetea, *François Guichardin, sa vie publique et sa pensée politique* (Paris: Picart, 1926), p. 63. Also Paslo Treves, *Il Realismo politico di Francesco Guicciardini* (Florence: "La Nuova Italia," 1931).

society whose prosperity was founded on industry and commerce, those who could exercise a direct and preponderant action on trade and production would have the political direction."¹⁸ In the field of foreign affairs, too, his particular interest in Spain, for example, was not accidental. His main idea was the formation of an anti-Spanish coalition (the Pope, France, and Venice). It is true that the sack of Rome (1527) put an end to these intentions, but it must be said that, as chief of foreign affairs for the papacy, he gave proof of his great diplomatic talents. He defined politics as "a game of compacts, not of revolutions," and this is why he also believed that "politics is not a matter for the people" (*Ricordi*, p. 140); the people can never grasp all the complications of affairs and lets itself be guided by impulse, because "it is always desirous of new things."

This statement on the fickleness of the plebeians, almost identical to Machiavelli's, explains his conception of history. The *History of Italy*—the work which first included the history of all provinces of the Italian peninsula—does in fact show us, above all, a "game of conventions." But Guicciardini remains an incomparable master in this field: his own opinions are always compared with those of other historians, and—which seems most important—he really makes an exposition of political questions in presenting both their pro and con aspects. Guicciardini attains this end especially through quotations of arguments from two opposing parties. For example, when he relates the discussion on reform of the Florentine government, after the discourse of Soderini, he writes: "But in contrast to Guid'Antonio Vespucci . . . I speak as follows." He presents in this same way almost all the discussions of Florence, Venice, and so forth.¹⁹ This "dialectical" procedure consists essentially of recognizing the inseparability of contradictory opinions quoted almost verbatim. This is why Montaigne writes that from Guicciardini "one may learn the truth of the affairs of his times" (II, 10).

We know that Guicciardini led simultaneously both the active and the contemplative life. If he had not quit his university career, his works

18. Otetea, *op. cit.*, p. 326. Several years after the death of Guicciardini appeared the book *Della Repubblica di Genova* (1559) by Umberto Foglietta. The author presents in support of his thesis—the superiority of the new patrician class in comparison to the old—some very interesting arguments: he compares the properties of representative members of these two groups with the aid of abundant lists of names. Occasionally, he makes fun of the supposed virtues of the old patriciate. It is not surprising that upon the publication of this book the author was obliged to leave his native city (cf. C. Curcio, *Utopisti e riformatori sociali del cinquecento* (Bologna, 1941), pp. xii and 19 ff.).

19. *Della Istoria d'Italia . . . , Libri XX* (Venezia: G. Pasquali, 1738), I, 98 ff., 101 ff., 477 ff.; II, 1020 ff.

would doubtless have been less interesting from our point of view. But the historians of the time were never professional writers: Villani was a member of the council of the woolworker's guild; Bruni, a diplomat and chancellor of the Florentine republic; Capponi, chief magistrate of Florence; and Machiavelli, secretary of the "Council of Ten."

Contact with the practical side of daily life was considered an integral part of education. We can find proof of this tendency in Vespasiano da Bisticci: his biographies in large measure complete the marginal information of Machiavelli and Guicciardini on the cultural life of the epoch.²⁰ Thus, in these "biographies" may be found information about the sphere of intellectual interests of "illustrious men," on libraries (as, for instance, the description of the accumulation of works in the Strozzi Library), on cultural milieus, on scientific contacts between philosophers and scholars, on the education of the children of patricians, and many other matters.

Vespasiano da Bisticci draws the attention of the reader to the fact that "assiduity to know divides the time" of his heroes. This is another proof that time—along with money—was becoming the fundamental category of a new scale of values. We read, for example, that Manetti "condemned idle men devoid of any virtue, who spend their time uselessly." There may be a certain stylization in all this, but the causes of such a stylization are very characteristic. These works also show the great changes which had taken place in man's mentality: the world had already become a veritable dominion of men, and "terrestrial" problems, above all, now occupied the attention of historians.

Thanks to the author's interest in the history of his native country, we can reconstruct today the affairs of the provinces and cities of almost all Europe. Although these chronicles often contain little material for the historian of the social sciences, the intentions of the chroniclers merit our attention. They were enthusiastic about souvenirs of the past; for example, Johannes Turmair (Aventinus) underscores his efforts to gain knowledge of sources (in the broadest meaning of this term). For years, he writes, without regard for rain or snow, for cold waves or heat waves, he visited all of Bavaria looking for "manuscripts, ancient charters, conveyances, letters, chronicles, rumors, rhymes, aphorisms, ballads, adventures, songs, missals, holy relics, monstresances, old stones, old coins, . . ." ²¹

20. *Virorum illustrium Cuius qui extiterunt vitae auctore caevo Vespasiano Florentino, Spicilegium Romanum* (Rome, 1839), Vol. I. For example: "Volendo Donato [Acciajuoli] oltre alla dottrina ed eloquenza acquistare della pratica delle cose del mondo . . ." etc., (p. 438).

21. Johannes Turmair genannt Aventinus, *Sämtliche Werke* (Munich, 1883), IV, 7-8.

The role of "sources" had been growing ever since the Reformation; in the course of scientific polemics—although these were often concerned with theological questions—the adversaries stressed the importance of historical arguments. Therefore, the author who possessed the "best" historical arguments, that is, the original sources, was considered to be the "best."

At first it was obviously the adherents of the Reformation (especially Melancthon) who accented the primordial importance of sources. Then, hoping to vanquish the adversary with their own weapons, Catholic writers themselves appropriated the same method. This is symptomatic of the development of critical thought, and when Caesar Baronius, at the command of the Pope, prepared his *Annales ecclesiastici* (1588), directed against Lutheran concepts, he gave much room to the sources which he had found in the archives and libraries of the Vatican, theretofore inaccessible to most writers.

Along with the question of the validity of sources, the second problem in which writers were passionately interested was the geographical factor in historical research, closely linked with the desire for the strict territorial localization of historical events. Hence the great popularity of all sorts of geographical works. Without knowledge of geography "any reading of ancient authors is blind and any account of events is deaf," wrote Glareanus in his dedication to Jean Laski (Johannes Lasco) which opens the work *On Geography* (Basel, 1537). This was precisely—according to Laski's expression—the book of "expurgated," that is, critical, geography.²²

The essential value of a criticism of this sort consists not alone in the correction of faults of erudition in one's predecessors, but especially in the role of observation combined with the critical analysis of the authorities. When Mathias de Miechovia corrects the information of Herodotus—who claimed that all inhabitants of northern countries were transformed annually into wolves—he closes his argument with these significant words: "which, as experience shows, is completely fabricated and fictitious."²³ He rejects many fantastic tales as false, because "this is not the truth according to our own experience." After reading this book, Ulrich von Hutten wrote to Pirkheimer (1518) that many opinions of authors must now "be transformed into fables."

22. Herman Dalton, *Lasciana* (Berlin: Reuter & Reichard, 1898), pp. 115-16.

23. *Tractatus de duabus Sarmatiis*, first edition published at Cracow in 1517; then dozens of editions and translations into German, Dutch, Italian, etc.

Thus the increase in knowledge of human affairs paralleled the "broadening" of the known physical world. Guicciardini recognized that the great maritime discoveries have played a decisive role "in the knowledge of the earth" and foresaw in particular that they would shake the theological interpretation of the physical world. The understanding of the great importance of these changes was deepened, thanks to reflections on the role of the inventions of gunpowder and printing. It was probably Jean Bodin who first came to the conclusion that these events presented a convincing testimony to the superiority of the new times: "The invention of printing in itself could easily match all the inventions of the ancients."²⁴

This new evaluation naturally led to a displacement of the center of gravity of research: history became more and more the science of the present. In the eyes of the modern writer, man was no longer an unchanging abstraction but rather the living being, anchored in social and political reality. This is the beginning of the rich political literature of the second half of the sixteenth century.

III. THE STRUCTURE AND DYNAMICS OF SOCIETY IN THE EYES OF POLITICAL WRITERS

1. *Analysis of Social and Political Reality: Postulates of Change*

Fricius Modrevius (Frycz Modrzewski) presents in his treatise the concept of the total reconstruction of manners, of laws, of the church, of the schools, and of international affairs, each book of the *De republica* being devoted to one of these problems. The observation of life was the starting point for his postulates dealing with the total amendment of the republic. His descriptions of social and political life were founded on a rich experience as secretary to the king of Poland, and literature played a very limited role. He considers fully the comparative analysis of social facts, referring to the phenomena of several countries of contemporary Europe (Germany, France, Italy, Switzerland, Hungary, Spain, etc.). Like Montaigne, he directs the reader's attention to the great importance of travel.²⁵

This method of observation permits him to draw just conclusions of a

24. Jean Bodin: *La Méthode de l'histoire*, translation and edition by Pierre Mesnard (Paris-Algiers: "Les Belles Lettres," 1941), p. 299. English ed.: *Method for Easy Comprehension of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945).

25. K. Dobrowolski, "Le Problème de la méthodologie de la science polonaise à l'époque de la Renaissance" (in Polish); "La Renaissance en Pologne" ("Odrodzenie w Polsce") (Warsaw, 1956), II, 1, 217 ff. The author analyzes the works of Fricius and of other Polish writers from the point of view of the historian of the social sciences.

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

general nature. He states among other things that "the nobility have as many enemies as subjects" and that "a commonwealth cannot prosper with nobles alone" (II, 10). Faithful to his idea that the principal duty of the writer is always to tell the truth, he thought that the supreme aim of his life was to extirpate the erroneous opinions prevalent in society and that this task constituted the indispensable condition for the improvement of the political regime.

Fricius conceived the aims and tasks of science in modern fashion: "arts grow with time and with exercise" (III, 4). He understood the essence of the evolution of science and defined it as an enrichment, realized by each generation, of the theses elaborated by scholars who, on the one hand, appeal to the thought of their predecessors and, on the other hand, themselves find successors to continue their own realizations. He saw the relationship of the science of law not only to philosophy but also to history; and for this reason he wished to intrust the preparation of a collection of laws "to jurists, to philosophers, and to historians."

Fricius' ideas appear with particular clarity where the radical elements of his thought are no longer hidden behind the veil of ordinary forms—where conservatism is the direct target of his attacks. From this point of view the concept of the transformation of the state and the law, presented in his *On the Improvement of the Commonwealth*, has a deeply anticonservative character. Fricius also attacked "the ancestral customs" so much appreciated by the nobility, who saw in them an alleged incomparable model of life. He demonstrated that traditional systems deserved our respect but that, as a result of the unceasing sequence of changes, it is absolutely necessary to get rid of them.

Fricius thus opposed to the conservative and traditional method of argument—which his adversaries used—a new type of reasoning, the evolutionist, which permitted him to demonstrate the need for a reconstruction of the political and social regime of his country. In *De republica*, we find, on the one hand, principles which indicate how to correct (*emendare*) the regime of the state and, on the other hand, rules created under the influence of the desire to constitute (*constituere*) the new regime of a better state (hence, the ideal), and it is in this domain only that Fricius' state is marked by utopian traits.

Fricius' predecessors and contemporaries had published works which treated fragmentary questions; the jurists decided to write treatises embracing—in the best hypothesis—the general problems of the law (Apel, Lagus, Zasius, Oldendorp). Even the next generation (Vigelius, Gail) did

not go beyond the limits of the problems of the "jurisconsults"—most of these writers really exercised the function of counselor-at-law.

This is why the *De republica* created a great stir not only among the humanists of the sixteenth century (Celio Secundo Curione, Sebastian Castellio, Johannes Oporinus, Giovanni Giustiniano) but also among writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for example, in the *Dictionnaire* of Pierre Bayle (1697)—who cites, among others, the Dutch scholar van der Kun's interesting opinion on Fricius—and in Réal's *The Science of Government* (1751).

2. The Concept of Universal Law

Unlike Fricius—who put especial emphasis on social problems—Jean Bodin concentrated his attention almost exclusively on the political structure. There is nothing surprising in this, as it was the political regime which, in France, cried out for reform. Montaigne—Bodin's contemporary—states correctly in his *Essais* that France, in the second half of the sixteenth century, really represented a conglomeration of "small principalities" functioning, to all intents and purposes, independently (I, 42).

Bodin attempted a theoretical justification of the centralized monarchy. As a writer, he had a profound knowledge of the problem, his *Method of History* already including—as announced in the Preface—"a very abundant list of memorable facts." He took them not only from "printed" sources but also from his "experience" as advocate at the Paris *parlement*. Convinced that "the best part of universal law is well hidden in history," he joined the political attitude with that of the historian of law. In his historical research he gave free rein to his "comparative curiosity."²⁶

Bodin conceived his treatise according to the principles of a coherent system: each fragment of the reasoning forms part of a logically arranged whole. He also excels in the differentiation of apparently homogeneous phenomena; his considerations of the "difference between the State and the Government,"²⁷ accompanied by an analysis of the political regimes of Venice and Germany, showing, for example, that Germany was not a monarchy but an aristocracy, or proving that Poland, Denmark, and Sweden "are changing and uncertain states, dependent on the prince or the nobility as powerful" (I, 10, p. 228), bears witness to Bodin's ability

26. Jean Moreau-Ribbel, *Jean Bodin et le droit public comparé* (Paris: Vrin, 1933), p. 46.

27. *Les six Livres de la République* (Paris, 1576) II, 2, p. 272; quotations and pagination of the Lyons edition of 1593. English ed.: *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, abridged and translated by M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Blackwell, 1955).

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

to distinguish the form of the regime from its real substance. He also understood the importance of historical research for the understanding of the current state of a certain political phenomenon: "There is indeed need to see where the change in the republic comes from, before judging it" (IV, 1, p. 584). And this is why, along with opinions of writers, he gathers accounts of the events which took place "before our eyes" (as in, V, 4, p. 749) and transmits to us "rather notable [examples] from our memory."²⁸

Bodin naturally chose examples capable of proving his principal thesis, very often, for instance, using the Rome of Caesar's time, which is reasonable, assuming that he wished to show the superiority of the centralized regime. It was not accidental that he wrote: "There is nothing more just than that which is necessary, as an old Roman senator said" (VI, 2, p. 878). Thus he poses at the center of his considerations—as Grotius and Althusius had done—the problem of theoretical research on the genesis of sovereignty: Did it repose primitively in the people or in the prince? And it should not be forgotten that an abundant literature of this type paved the way for reflections on the "social contract"—the fundamental idea concerning the development of the sciences of man and of society in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Jean Bodin did not wish to follow the path of Plato and Thomas More and "construct a republic in idea without effect" (I, 1, p. 4). But—as in Fricius and many others—one can easily discover his ideal scarcely veiled by the notion of a "well-ordered republic." Analyzing all the members of the "organism" of the state—a typical comparison in the political literature of the sixteenth century—he almost always compares their activity with the optimum possibilities of the "true image of the well-ordered republic" (VI, 6, p. 1057). This is yet another proof that the vision of a future ideal played an important role in the formation of the social sciences.

3. *The Reflection of Reality and the Postulates of Change in the Utopias*

Toward the end of the last century Karl Kautsky²⁹ drew the attention of scholars to the criticism of the economic, social, and political situation in England in Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516). Today his research requires

28. *Op. cit.*, V, 6, p. 829. He notes, for example, the accounts of contemporary English, French, Polish ambassadors, etc. (I, 8, p. 139; IV, 6, p. 623; V, 1, p. 669; VI, 5, p. 976, etc.), and refers to the practice of the Parisian *parlement* (e.g., II, 5, p. 439; III, 6, p. 470).

29. *Thomas More und seine Utopie* (1887). English ed.: *Thomas More and His Utopia* (New York: International Publishers, 1927).

revision, but a quick glance is sufficient to reveal that *Utopia* offers something more than the simple image of an ideal state. The work undoubtedly contains several critical elements directed against reality and forms, in a certain sense, a negative test of social and political reality.

Here is the way in which his contemporaries themselves treated More's work: Erasmus of Rotterdam in a letter to Ulrich von Hutten (1519) wrote that More had shown "what the bad situation of the State depended on" (he was thinking especially of England), and Beatus Rhenanus said in 1518 that More "had exposed—especially in the *Utopia*—his true opinion of the situation." The same opinion may be repeated for later utopias as well (Campanella, Bacon) and for all treatises of this type which drew their origin from that transitional epoch when the old structures were shaken and the new ones were not yet erected.

Discontented with the reality they saw, the creators of utopias—when they were not glorifying myths of the past—were convinced that the regulation of life could assure happiness for citizens of the future state. According to them, irrationally complicated reality was to be replaced by a common future, rationally organized.

By limiting themselves to examples less well known, we see that the Italian utopias of the second half of the sixteenth century³⁰ drew their origin from different factors. Doni wrote under the influence of More's *Utopia*; Patrizi, under that of Platonism and the idealization of the Venetian regime; Agostini, under that of an idealized Venice and theocratic Catholicism re-establishing itself after the Council of Trent. Nevertheless, all these works—besides a detailed analysis of the regime of the future and an appeal to the daily experience of the reader—have one characteristic trait in common: they devoted the most space to questions directly linked to property (riches and poverty, succession, usury, work, and wages). The most radical is Doni. In his ideal state everything will be held in common: "No longer will one man be richer than another. Each will have as much food to eat and clothing to wear as any other, and each will have a house furnished like those of others."³¹ The state of the future would then be the antithesis of the present state, which Doni defines as a "mad" regime—his thesis is entitled *The Wise and the Mad World*. Such was the diagnosis which condemned the present in the name of the future.

Long treated in the nature of "curiosities," utopian thought is now be-

30. C. Curcio, *Utopisti e riformatori*. . . . The book contains texts and a critical introduction.

31. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences

coming the subject of serious studies.³² Before they had developed to their fullest extent, it can be said, without fear of error, that the ideals of the future had always played a catalytic role in scientific reflection on man and society. Likewise, "the well-ordered republican regime" of Guicciardini, the thinking of Fricius directed "to constituting a republic," or Bodin's conception of the "well-ordered republic," each rationally justified vision of the future developed the social thought of historians, political writers, and philosophers.

4. Philosophical Reflections on Man and Society: Montaigne, Bacon, and Hobbes

As if to confirm Hegel's words about Minerva's owl which "takes flight late in the evening," not until the decline of the Renaissance do we find the origins of philosophical reflection on man and society. It was Montaigne who first began to observe and interpret the facts of human life in the manner of modern philosophy. For his knowledge in this field, he used "bookish" and "experimental" sources—first mainly bookish, later mainly experimental.

As far as individual psychology is concerned, he was already acquainted with several modern notions (such as instinctive movements, the subconscious, intuition, suggestion [I, 20]) and demonstrates the uselessness of "relative and borrowed" wisdom which consists merely of "filling the memory" and repeating "authoritative" opinions (I, 24). Without realizing it, Montaigne also introduced new concepts into "social psychology." For example, he stresses the importance of the objective recounting of facts, that is, of narrations which have not been deformed by commentaries (I, 22); he knew the value of introducing a certain "distance" into the representation of things (cf. I, 31, a passage in which he introduces the subject of cannibals).

Although his rich "practice of life" strengthened his conservatism, it permitted him to attain exceptional universality of reflection. As a court judge for seventeen years, he was able daily to observe social conflicts, and, as a man who went into "society," he witnessed the increasing greed for money, observing, for example, that the avarice of fathers very often turned their sons into simple thieves. His great predecessor, Rabelais, represented the enthusiasm for science typical of a true son of the people.

32. Most recently, G. Duveau, "La Résurrection de l'Utopie," *Cahiers internationaux de la sociologie* (Paris), XXIII (1957), 3 ff. The author has already published several studies on the sociology of Utopia.

Montaigne, a gentleman, although his family was ennobled rather late (and entirely in consequence of this!), adopted a skeptical attitude toward the science.

He showed a favorable judgment of the new concepts, not only those of Paracelsus, but also (rather rare for the time) those of Copernicus. He thus demonstrated the modern tendency of science, which is more and more, as Bachelard expresses it, "a reflection on reflection." At the same time, however, he added this significant comment: "Who knows whether a third opinion a thousand years from now may upset the two preceding ones?" His attitude expresses equally understanding of the endless growth of science and skepticism. We must not reproach him for this today; doubt sometimes has an even greater creative force than enthusiasm. At the drawn of the Renaissance Dante had already written these words of profound wisdom: "Wherefore doubt springs, like a shoot, at the foot of truth" (*Par.*, IV, 130-31).

We know that Francis Bacon, whose *Essays* appeared in 1597, was a zealous reader and imitator of Montaigne. This would be of no importance if in developing his methodology of empiricism he did not also take into consideration, along with the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of man. This he divided into anthropology, which treats of individuals, and politics, which treats of social phenomena. For Bacon the scientific method, based on experience, not only establishes the facts but also—always based on induction—provides the interpretation of these facts: "Therefore from a closer and purer league between these two faculties, the experimental and the rational (such as has never yet been made) much may be hoped" (*Novum organum*, I, 95).

Bacon himself, though closely tied to the "practice of social life"—as diplomat, as jurist, and finally as Lord Chancellor of England—inclined especially toward the natural sciences. In his utopia (*The New Atlantis*) he traced the image of the state of the future, whose citizens would lead a happy life, thanks to technical inventions.

There is no need to stress here the role which the application of the Baconian method might have in the field of the social sciences, the less so as Bacon himself was convinced that the method applied in his works to the sciences of nature was also of great importance in the field of the juridical sciences.³³ This task might have been undertaken by his friend

33. P. H. Kocher, "Francis Bacon on the Science of Jurisprudence," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XVIII (1957), 3 ff.

Robert Lenoble writes: "Inventor of the experimental method [Bacon] scarcely had time to experiment" and adds that "the 'Bacon case' has not yet been cleared up." Declaring that

Thomas Hobbes. But Hobbes did not recognize Bacon's value as a philosopher and applied the deductive method in his political philosophy—that is, in the most original part of his system. The historian of the social sciences, however, turns his attention especially to the philosopher's mode of realistic observation. Robert Lenoble writes that modern materialism begins its career with Hobbes, for whom "the phenomenon acquires such value that it throws all the rest into shadow and is, in sum, defined as the only reality."³⁴

Starting with the principle that society and nature are governed by the same laws, Hobbes pitilessly uncovered the egoistic impulses of his fellows. Obviously, he could not complain of a lack of examples: observation of the daily conduct of men was sufficient for him to prove that Aristotle's thesis—that man is, by his nature, a social being—is entirely false. The fact that no one had doubted this traditional dogma was—according to Hobbes—the result "of a too superficial examination of human nature."³⁵

In accordance with his principle that human nature is invariable, Hobbes sought proofs of human egoism either in the "classical repertory" (Greece and Rome) or in phenomena "outside time"—for example, in the manner in which men behave in assemblies. He expressed himself clearly, his reasoning was convincing and logical, and therefore it is not at all surprising that his works have been admired both by his contemporaries (Gassendi, Sorbière) and by succeeding generations. Diderot, for example, wrote that the treatise *Human Nature* "is a masterpiece of logic and reason."³⁶ Today Robert Lenoble writes:

One is immediately struck by the extremely "modern" character of this philosophy, if it is agreed that "modern" be defined as the elimination of the transcendent. Psychology is reduced to the study of more and more complicated reflexes. Ethics ceases to be a matter of conscience and is oriented toward "the science of manners." Politics dominates the duality of individual and state and becomes resolutely totalitarian. Science, finally, takes over the monopoly so long enjoyed by philosophy.³⁷

And, in fact, the influence of Hobbes's works was great, especially

"every great doctrine surpasses its system by its method," he says that, through his inventions, Bacon "was a man of genius who was precursor of true science" ("Origines de la pensée scientifique moderne," in *Histoire de la science*, published under the direction of Maurice Daumas [Paris, 1957], pp. 421 ff.).

34. Lenoble, *op. cit.*, p. 523.

35. *Elementa philosophiae, sectio tertia: De cive*, III, 1, 1, 2. First edition published in Paris, 1642.

36. *Œuvres*, Assérat ed. (Paris: Garnier, 1875-77), XV, 124 (also III, 466).

37. Lenoble, *op. cit.*, pp. 526-27.

during the Enlightenment. Continuing the tradition of the greatest historians and jurists of the Renaissance (Guicciardini, Machiavelli, Bodin, Grotius), he was at the same time—thanks to his rationalism and realism—the promoter of an “ethical sociology” which is the most modern form of relativism.

Hobbes taught his readers acuteness and independence of observation, as Montaigne led them to reflect on the complicated nature of human opinions. Bacon, finally, bequeathed the empirical philosophy of man as a constituent part of a total system of sciences. Founded on induction, this philosophy of man—anthropology and politics—aimed at the search for laws, that is, for the constant properties of social phenomena.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary methodology of the historical and social sciences owes much to contemporary sociological interpretation, which sees in inter-human conflicts the essential element of history and positivism requiring scholars to rely mainly on facts. And it is precisely in the works of the writers of the Renaissance era that we find the germs of this modern scientific attitude.

Although the conceptions presented here may appear at first glance to depend exclusively on an enumeration of facts, the preceding chapters show that this is simply an illusion, because it is obviously impossible to separate the “science of social facts” of any given writer from his “point of view” on these facts. And this “point of view” itself became more and more modern. Historians, political writers, and philosophers eliminated as far as possible dependence on authorities and rejected useless details of erudition and rhetoric. The activity of contemporary life has found a perfect equivalent in the dynamics of scholars. In his letter to Pirkheimer (1518), Ulrich von Hutten pronounced these celebrated and significant words: “What an epoch! . . . What vigilance of minds! What flourishing of the sciences!”

Founded in knowledge of the past, excited by the present, that “vigilance of minds” often ran ahead of the future. Thanks to this—among other things—the premises of the social sciences developed at the time of the Renaissance.

The author of this article—who offers only the fundamental elements of the problem—hopes for severe criticism which will shed light on numerous details and will no doubt contribute to the verification of more than one hypothesis.

SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND THE POWER OF THE STATE

The simplest and no doubt the most persistent of the ideas held on the relationship between society and power, from Menenius Agrippa to Auguste Comte, is that of an analogy between the social body and the human body. Both these men deduced that power is nothing other than the supreme regulating function of all functional activities, as harmoniously integrated in society as they are in human physiology. Ethnographic study often strengthened this organicist conception through description of the various social functions as necessary or vital for the cohesion and the existence of primitive society. But historic societies provide a spectacle quite different from that of an integrated organism. In them social functions are not abstractions but are seen rather in the form of human groups whose relationships can scarcely be said to show an organic solidarity. Within these groups and working to set them against each other, powers have their own interests which they must protect against the inroads of ambitions. The permanence of certain functions (military, religious, and economic, for example) does not imply permanence in the structures which implement them or in the real or fictional power which accompanies them. Their meaning is ambivalent. Obviously, they contribute to the architecture of a society; they may have a latent content which is a

Translated by James H. Labadie.

disintegrating factor from the moment when their hierarchy no longer suits the changing stratifications of the social body.

Functional study is therefore not sufficient for a description of society, and even less so for its characterization. To it must be added a study of the stratifications which are to society what altitude lines are to an orographic map or, more exactly, the group of isotherms or isobars which define on paper a given climatic situation. In approaching that description, there are as many possible strata as there are criteria to consider, but most of them are of little value in characterizing what is universally known as a social class. Nothing is more difficult to achieve than a precise limitation of this concept, which Marxism has used and even abused without giving it a unique definition and which in Marxist thought is inseparable from a messianic presupposition. However, if every stratum does not determine a class, it is still true that the notion of class is linked to a complex of strata among which may be discovered, more or less successfully, a certain number of correlations. Let us retain, among the possible criteria, those which seem to us indispensable, the list being far less exhaustive as the idea of class is extended in space and limited only by the analysis of concrete situations.

At the present time social stratification has as its basic criterion the level of income, but this is truly fruitful only if one discriminates in it the economic nature of the income. It is completed by the multiple stratifications of the professional or, more generally, the functional types, which imply, along with objective notions of qualification, capacity, or responsibility, a psychological appreciation and a historical consideration of the prestige linked to the function and of the place which custom assigns it in the social pyramid. From the functional criterion we pass without transition to that constituted by the way of life. This is linked to the notion of expenditure but does not always have a causal relationship with the income level, being penetrated by what Veblen called the "invidious distinction"—the need for prestige—which man associates with his consciousness of self.

As these criteria are made more precise, statistical analysis loses its interest as an instrument for approaching stratifications. Exact in the study of income and professions, it is risky and grossly schematic in the study of the way of life, poorly determined as this is through structural perception of expenditure. On the other hand, the analysis of a social behavior assumes greater importance as relational factors among various strata intervene. Some vary with functional changes caused by technical or economic evolution. Others appear as crystallized, made of habits inherited from the

Social Structures and the Power of the State

past, resistant to the wear and tear of time, and accompanied by archetypes which weigh on the minds of the living and shape their present behavior. We cannot truthfully neglect the presence of these archetypes, which survive and are even reborn through revolutionary periods.

The criteria enumerated here, by no means exhaustively, sometimes permit the isolation of a social class in which a common behavior is crystallized, linked to a common consciousness of their situation which its members may have. But the class thus defined, as the element in a structural analysis, does not thereby acquire an authentic social life. There must be added to the body of psychological traits a will and a capacity to act which make the class a political and historical factor. It is in this sense that Schumpeter could write: "Social classes are not abstractions created by the analytical observer, but rather living entities existing as such."¹ The class thus becomes a social and political force and a dynamic factor of general evolution.

Historical circumstances, fortuitous at first glance, may play the role of a chemical detector and may cause to appear as a social force a class which has previously been but a structural category. Thus the Lyon insurrection of November, 1831, because it was disengaged from any ideological hypothesis, "revealed" to bourgeois France the existence of a working class, acting for itself. Before, the proletariat had been but a suffering category, outside the political order and the circuit of consumer goods, as Sismondi had observed in 1819. By behaving so spectacularly as a class, the proletariat posed the problem of its integration into the society from which it was, at the time, rejected.

In this common will to modify a situation of which one disapproves, and to act in consequence thereof, is manifested what has since Marx been called "class-consciousness." This "consciousness" does not mark in any particular way the aim pursued; it implies not a utopian scheme to be realized in life but essentially a will to modify social relations in a direction more favorable to the class. It may, depending on the situation, take the most diverse forms, from that of a modest claim to a desire for the dismantling of hierarchical structures. It may aim at the establishment of contractual relations or at the subversion of the state; it may occupy itself with narrowly functional problems or wrap itself in a political ideology. Like all collective sentiments, it feels strongly the pressure of the events which stimulate or compress it, as the feeling of a common destiny appears

1. *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (2d ed.; New York and London: Harper & Bros., 1947) (p. 77 of the French edition).

or disappears. The consciousness of a particular collective situation, it is not by nature an a priori belief in a certain historic mission, as the Marxists hold, except when it is embodied, in given circumstances, in a revolutionary ideology. Besides, Marxists such as Kautsky and Lenin have declared that the "socialist consciousness" does not emanate from the working class. "It is imported from outside into the class struggle of the proletariat and is not something which arises spontaneously."²

This spontaneous and therefore non-ideological class-consciousness is seen, however, through images in which archetypes have been crystallized. Of recent formation, the working class is still frequently stirred by images drawn from its origin and differing from one nation to another. Down through the generations are confusedly accumulated social "experiences" which feed archetypes whose presence is uncovered in later manifestations. In France the memory of the nineteenth century, an era in which the working class fought for recognition as a class integrated into society, marks the class spirit with an affective content steeped in the bitter sentiment of "injustice in itself," the injustice submitted to by an unrecognized entity. In the United States class feeling had, on the contrary, to surmount the multiplicity of origins resulting from a century of immigration and interior mobility which did not allow for the creation of a solid permanent base on which to erect an organized force. In Europe a hundred years ago the working class was exogenous, deprived of political and economic rights, excluded from a society and from a state which knew it only in its working strength. Now a force integrated into society, it still retains from its proletarian condition a sometimes justified fear which shrouds its actions in an agonizing feeling of eternal insecurity.

Marx used to say that history is the story of class struggles. The difficulty with an aphorism of this sort is that it projects into the past an interpretation of the liberal society of the nineteenth century without specifying whether the term "class" retains the same economic and social content and suggesting that the specific motivations of the liberal world were found in any given preceding type of society. In democratic society class is a complex ensemble of strata which are open in the sense that they are subject to no juridical or religious interdiction of a sacred character. It is not the same thing in most traditional societies constituted in more or less closed groups, hemmed in with obligations and restrictions, and with little possibility of interpenetration. If we use the term "class" to designate

2. Karl Kautsky in *Neue Zeit*, No. 3 (October, 1901).

Social Structures and the Power of the State

these groups, we do so in its original meaning of a number of persons or objects of a common character, without specifying in advance what this may be.

Until our own era there is found in the history of peoples of Indo-European origin an exogenous class, rejected from those structures which integrate the other classes and which generally bear a sacred character. The Vedic tradition opposes to the three functional classes grouped under the title of *dvijas*, "twice-born," that of the *śūdras* dedicated to servile labors—the internal proletariat in Toynbee's sense—and to the stain of an impurity forbidding them access to the mysteries of the religious community. Such a society founded on a polarity of the sacred reappears in multiple guises throughout past history. To this polarity is linked an exogenous class, like that of the slaves in ancient society, or the serfs and peasants called "free" in medieval society. In Athens freedom of the city is relatively available. In the Middle Ages nobility and clergy are closed classes admission to which is accompanied by sacramental rites; the urban bourgeoisie raises about itself the double inclosure of its ramparts and its privileges.

The exclusion of such a numerous class as the peasantry had as its corollary the closed and organized nature of the governing classes, which was preserved by a web of obligations and interdictions participating in a hierophany blended of pagan myths and Judeo-Christian traditions. Every political power played a part, whether it were the expression of a complex system of suzerainty or that of a monarch uniting in himself the traits of the paterfamilias, of sacerdotal magic, and of the happy warrior. Every extension of this power had the effect of creating a bureaucracy whose continuity through all regimes is the most remarkable fact of modern times. When the reciprocal bonds of suzerainty had fallen into disuse, royal power was found, by a logical evolution, to be the desired intermediary between the divine and the human but not without serious conflicts between the spiritual and the temporal resulting from this claim.

The sacred nature of monarchical power was to become more marked in that it had no existence except through a precarious balance among the privileged classes. To assure itself a better stability, this power sought to substitute itself for the functioning classes, reducing them to the status of its obedient servants. Through submission of the economy as well as of religious and intellectual forces, the absolutist state concentrated the "spirit" of society and appears to our eyes as an anticipation of the Hegelian state. In both types civil society is for the monarch nothing more than

the material of his strength; if Louis XIV claimed to stop the course of the sun, Hegel fixed the time at the accession of his ideal state. Whatever the source of sovereignty in one or the other, the polarity of sanctity-impurity was exercised in a similar manner, the payment of taxes under an absolute monarchy being likened to a defilement!

The Revolution removed its sacred nature from the power and transferred it to the sovereign nation. But this nation is composed of a sum of individual monads facing a power which is the emanation of that sum, that is, the master. Against this power to come the members of the Constituent Assembly declared the undeniable character of the rights of man and, among them, of personal property whose natural basis must permit the individual to assure his own material independence before the power. Participating in the natural right and not in a positive right, property becomes the condition of a balance between society and power. As a consequence of this, the classes deprived or poorly provided with property are excluded from the political order.

This new balance would no doubt have been stable if the industrial revolution, of which the revolutionaries knew nothing, had not made of the proletariat "the most numerous and the poorest class" (Saint-Simon). Now this class is exogenous, deprived of political rights, and outside the consumption of the products it makes. It is forbidden the right of coalition, and its right to organize is disputed; so are certain aspects of civil equality. It impressed the interior of society as a group of barbarians—in Aristotle's sense of the term—who had come to camp but not to be assimilated.³

The state of bourgeois society is so devalued that it becomes a modest servant of the economically dominant class. This, Marx, criticizing the Hegelian conception, calls "a delegation which directs the common affairs of the whole bourgeois class."⁴

For Marx, as for the liberals, the state reflects the social and economic structure. Marx's theory is also a reflection of his age. His conception of classes and of their struggles is marked by the specific dichotomy of nineteenth-century society, between property as the source of all rights and

3. The *Journal des débats* gave this term all its meanings when it wrote just after the events of Lyon: "The barbarians who threaten society are not in the Caucasus nor in the steppes of central Asia, they are to be found in the suburbs of our manufacturing cities" (December 8, 1831); quoted by F. Rude in *Le Mouvement ouvrier à Lyon*.

4. *The Communist Manifesto*. On this subject the statement of a minister of Louis-Philippe to the Chamber of Deputies may be quoted: "The state must reserve for itself all chances of ruin in order to preserve the companies from it."

Social Structures and the Power of the State

non-property, which is excluded from them—in other words, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. Liberal society did not escape from the polarity of the two forms of the sacred; but this polarity depends less on a functional division than on an economic fissure between two open classes without juridical or religious interdicts. "Property," Adolphe Thiers answered to Proudhon, "is a holy and sacred institution, which is nothing other than the free and unlimited development of human faculties, or nothing but Nature herself, obeyed and respected."⁵

This definition, inspired more by the *manipulum* of gentile society than by Roman quiritarian law, carries in itself a contradiction whose roots are to be found in the society of the time. It postulates at the same time a notion of the sacred, implying a static world, and a belief in progress, dynamic in spirit, which is the negation of such a world. Technical and economic progress produces a fluidity incompatible with a society which would like to believe itself crystallized and, a fortiori, with the lasting coexistence of an exogenous class. Participating in this fluidity, the proletariat is of a different nature from that of the *śūdras* of India and of medieval serfs. Thus it is that the nineteenth century appeared even to Sismondi as the century of demands.

The social integration of the proletariat—that is, its disappearance as an exogenous class—has been a trait common to the socialist schools of the nineteenth century in whatever utopian or realistic manner they approached it. These schools, some by proclaiming the "right to work," others "contractual" exchange, looking toward the creation of a welfare state or free social institutions, sought in individual liberty a basis which did not imply a personal ownership of the means of production.

The industrial societies would have long since exploded under the effect of their primitive dichotomy had their social and axiological structures not undergone profound mutations. Fluidity has broken the old crystallizations and "desacralized" property. Productivity, dependent on technical progress and its rational requirements, has, under certain conditions of control or planification, favored a relative balance between production and consumption and a more equalitarian distribution of national income. The mechanization of productive forces has reduced the importance of purely manual labor and contributed to the growth of a salaried middle class of white-collar workers in which technical capacity and concern for human relations meet. This vast and heterogeneous class, with

5. *De la propriété* (Paris: Paulin, Lheureux et Cie, 1848), p. 203.

numerous and often poorly defined strata, came to insert itself between the two poles of the old dichotomous society. Finally, political and union rights have destroyed the juridical basis of the exogenous class.

Paralleling this evolution, property has lost its sacred character, which it held through its physical and personal existence, and must now justify itself through the effectiveness of services rendered. In its form as movable goods it has been dematerialized and dispersed in the middle class which it does not transform into a leisure class. In its industrial form it has been depersonalized and relatively collectivized, acquiring a functional nature which is, according to Adolf Berle, an economic expression of the social organization. Invested, property is no longer a sacred entity but a right to profits, negotiable on the market. Limited through the interventions of the state, its use is even more regulated than it was in the epoch preceding liberal society; but this regulation is becoming the source of institutions which in the framework of democracy may facilitate the appearance of oligarchical nuclei.

In a similar manner the social law binds the changing relationships of capital and labor into a network of statist or free institutions which preserves existing stratifications and completes them with new ones. Among them vertical mobility is less the result of chance than of promotions within organized groups. A sort of social viscosity results from the institutional character of the classes and exerts a moderating effect on the oscillations between individual failure and success. Standardization of production techniques and of consumer goods creates a body of uniform lives which owe less to the person than to the class and which are not without danger for the full development of the person. Common types appear in the various strata, favorable to the homogeneity of a people even to the extent of causing monotonous stereotyped relationships. The industrial democracies, open in time and animated by an upsetting dynamism, perform the paradox of dissimulating their future under the monotonous crust of standardized social behaviors.

Democratic power derives its authority from the consensus of citizens. For this consensus not to be reduced to a myth, the citizen must exist in fact and not be totally absorbed by his labor or his function. This requires of man that he be at the same time inside and outside his function: extra-functional man is a man-reflection who does not see daily reality, accessible only at the interior of a social activity; intrafunctional man abdicates his generic nature and becomes as a living robot. The first postulate of a democratic society is each man's capacity and freedom to pass beyond his

Social Structures and the Power of the State

functional role, to judge this role not only from within but from without, and thus to accede to a knowledge of the relationships out of which the social and political body is woven. In the absence of this postulate, democracy is an empty formula or a thin veneer over an oligarchical or despotic system.

The division and the discipline of labor require a functional hierarchy in which directors and executors are lined up. Every organized task is subordinated to the weight of things and persons in a system of vertical relationships with a definite and precise mechanism. The isolated man arrives at political citizenship, as at a free social life, only through a system of horizontal relationships, escaping through definition from functional hierarchies and realizing a minimum of equality in fact. Through these relationships he compensates for his subordination to hierarchies which, beginning in his professional life, come to an end only with political power. Through them, he is able to defend his social status, to attain political citizenship, and thus to preserve his personal freedom. The sociologist Georg Simmel⁶ made the independence and the originality of the human person depend on the multiplicity of social circles which meet in the individual. Let us add that, aside from functional rigidities, it is in these free social circles that the originality of a people is worked out.

Within the horizontal relationships the unions play an essential compensating role. Founded on the notion of class, they represent its permanent expression; they constitute it, in the old sense of the term, by organizing its action and by disengaging the worker from his functional liaisons. In a position to resist the directing hierarchies, they substitute for pure subordination the contractual agreement, preserving the rights of each echelon and thus, paradoxically, reviving a type of relations nearer to those which existed between vassal and feudal suzerain than to those which have appeared in bourgeois society between employers and wage-earners. On the political level they stand as a social force which, along with others, counterbalances the force of the power and permits society to avoid the fate of a passive object held in its hands. Thus they contribute, along with other means, to the necessary distinction between society and the state—a distinction established by the Constituent Assembly through personal property.

The freedom of horizontal relationships in a stratified structure forms then the counterweight, of egalitarian spirit, to the hierarchic subordinations whose disappearance is inconceivable in our present society. It is

6. *Über soziale Differenzierung* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1890).

realized in fact by "intermediary bodies" detested by the Constituent Assembly that saw in them a threat to civic liberties. But a long evolution of structures will have been needed, bringing about the devaluation of property, so that these "intermediary bodies" may witness the integration of all classes into a single social body. The power of labor unions in particular means that the defense of the rights of labor henceforth takes place inside the social body and not on the outside, as in the last century.

Among the permanent adverse forces which struggle or strike a balance there is inevitably created a structural mimesis which seems to be a condition for the effectiveness of their confrontations. Like any other social forces, the "intermediary bodies," unions, parties, and diverse associations founded on free horizontal relationships create for themselves "apparatuses" of functionaries which are their *de facto* governments. Organized on a more or less democratic basis, the citizens of these bodies delegate their sovereignty to a power charged with acting in their name. Though ignorant of an internal penal code, this power does not lack the means of constraint toward those who disapprove of its conduct. There results from this a certain crystallization of social forces about their techno-bureaucratic apparatuses, which finally play a considerable role in democratic politics. These "apparatuses" would constitute a governing class (Machiavelli) if they were not in the final analysis the reflections of antagonisms interior to society. Much has been said about "mass media informations," that is, about the means of propaganda or of publicity which forge a political opinion generally ignorant or incompetent; and from this it has been deduced that the democratic system was limited to the elite—in Pareto's sense—which had control of these means. But it is enough that the apparatuses are in balance and at the same time counterbalance the political power for a public opinion to be born from the contradiction of behaviors, a public opinion capable of reacting to their politics. Forces, even the best organized, are not closed societies; and the public opinion which is thence derived, with what it includes of intuitive and affective elements, greatly surpasses the structures of class or party.

It is to these complex equilibriums that democracy owes the fact that it functions without being transformed into a bureaucratic oligarchy. But the counterpart of this is in a chronic weakness of the political power which generally fears the irreversible consequences of a break in the equilibrium. Its decisions no longer partake of the sacred character to which the old monarchies or theocracies owed the obedience of their subjects; these decisions are the more open to question in that they proceed from a broader

Social Structures and the Power of the State

and more farsighted view of things. No doubt charismatic authority then becomes the only means by which a democracy can survive the difficult moments when its very existence appears to be at stake.

Democratic society inherited from liberal society the idea that the state is theoretically the expression of the general will but practically that of social forces which, spontaneous or organized, are the true motive forces of historical development. Although the state, in its present hypertrophy, exercises a very great managing and regulating force, it has not been charged with a new sacred character.

On the other hand, our century has witnessed a resurgence of the sacred state in totalitarian regimes, Fascist or Communist. As in the Hegelian conception, the state there assumes the realization of what Hegel called "the moral idea," the supreme reason of a society which has abdicated its universal prerogatives in favor of the idea, even if, through a juridical fiction, it is no longer for the omnipotent and omniscient state anything other than the physical material of its corporal and spiritual power. In totalitarian regimes the single party and the state, closely associated with each other, constitute a new sacred entity as bearers of a myth pretending to absolute truth and as leaders of men toward the realization of this truth. The real power is the exclusivity of the centralized direction of the single party which has no other role than that of technical intermediary with the social body, imprisoned in the network of obligations and interdictions created by the power for the maintenance of its strength and, secondarily, that of the realization of its myth.

National Socialism had had the intention of suppressing classes, that is, of transforming them into the strata, homogeneous and obedient, of a vast pyramid which would have culminated in the *Führerprinzip*. There was not time to complete this construction, which was halted by the war and by the resistance of such old and strong traditional structures as those of the army. The inconsistency of the racist myth and its negation of all human values also hindered the political expansion of the system.

This is not true of communism, which, by its humanist and universal nature, is a myth favorable to the expansion of the totalitarian system. The party created by Lenin is to the class what the Hegelian state was to be to society; its consciousness, the realization of the idea it bears. The "moral idea" of Hegel becomes the "Marxist idea," that which Engels called "the realization of philosophy." In taking over the state, the party concentrates in it the totality of functions—it is political, economic, and

philosophic—and leaves no autonomous sector of activity to the civil society which Hegel, living on the contrary in contact with a liberal world, still respected while assigning it to a lesser sphere. Marx dreamed of a classless society which would absorb the state, while the Communist state absorbs society and makes of it a simple organ for the execution of the orders of power—an organ completely integrated into a hierarchized and centralized structure. What becomes of social classes under these conditions? One finds general stratifications according to the standard of living and the nature of employment. Kolkhozians, workers, and functionaries are separated, but their relationships cannot be defined by the known traits of democratic society. First of all, these classes are not open; each forms a closed stratum for which entry and exit are dependent on administrative regulations. Vertical mobility operates through legal nomination or co-optation, controlled by the party; it depends as much, if not more, on the political loyalty of those involved as on their individual capacities.

The class possesses no ability either to determine itself or to situate itself in the ensemble of the social body. The unions and other associations which, in a democracy, concentrate its means of expression and externalize its consciousness, have no independence vis-à-vis the political power; they are exclusively organs of that power, specialized on the social level, and have no other aim than to assure the carrying-out of its directives. In addition, although these organs are intercorporative, functional activity is their dominant trait, social activity being immediately dependent upon the party apparatus. As a result, the class is practically incapable of constituting itself and acting according to its own interests or duties. It does not exist as a social force—and in this sense it may be said that totalitarian society of the Communist type is classless—but the class subsists as the social material of power, as the field of execution of its directives or its projects.

We have seen that the organization of the class as social force was one of the means the individual might employ to escape from his purely functional role. In the totalitarian society of the Communist type this means exists no more than any other, since each activity, even cultural activity, is controlled by an organ of power. Horizontal relationships being neither free nor independent of the latter, the individual is the subject of vertical relationships, that is, of the hierarchy into which his official function fits. He is identified with this and exists only through it. Each function is the center of an ensemble of "privileges" which are specific to it and which imply material advantages. If he is constrained to give up the function,

Social Structures and the Power of the State

the individual loses these advantages, which are thus an obvious docility factor.

The absorption of society by the state and that of the individual by his function are illustrated by the fact that the law binds society and the individual but does not bind the power. "The work of the judge is reduced . . . to the implacable application of the law as a political expression of the party and the government," wrote the former judge, Vichinsky.⁷ It is thus the positive expression neither of a natural right, of a tradition, nor of a popular organization but that of a will of strength, utilizing to its ends the resources of the social body.

The absence of free horizontal relationships requires that the power intervene to satisfy individual aspirations and polarize them toward directed activities, useful to its politics; in this way they do not escape from a system of constraints and sanctions, inseparable from functional hierarchies. The latter extend their shadow to leisure-time activities as well as to labor—a shadow which does not bring security to those who work. Based for centuries on a triangular system, which permits supervision of the administration by the party and the secret police, the hierarchies meet not without friction among themselves, creating an insecurity in all echelons which persists despite evident weakening during the past few years.

These interfunctional conflicts are hardly ever externalized except in the rather rare cases where they serve to justify an important political operation. Extreme centralization authorizes hiding them from the eyes of an "opinion" deprived of the means of control and expression. In these conditions of relative ignorance and absolute silence, it is impossible to speak of the existence of a "public opinion," even in the upper classes of the society. One can at best note, among different levels of the party, the probable existence of what Merle Fainsod calls "family-type groups,"⁸ spontaneous and discreet associations for mutual protection against the often unpredictable politics of the upper levels. This creates a situation favorable to a "double morality," according to Djilas,⁹ in which two distinct opinions coexist in each person: one legal, designed for relations external to the group in question, and another, esoteric, which is doubtless the more authentic. What is called "public opinion" in the West cannot

7. *Cours d'instruction criminelle* (Moscow, 1936), p. 324.

8. *How Russia Is Ruled* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953).

9. *The New Class* (New York: Praeger, 1957).

be grasped. Fragmented, and without liberty of external expression, it no doubt exists more in what is not expressed than in external manifestations, in which it is difficult to distinguish what pertains to the official truth from what may arise from this unexpressed depth.

Every totalitarian regime maintains a sacred image of power for the moral justification of its acts. This power needs the presence of evil to prove its own identity with good; it must therefore re-create the united couple of "sanctity" and "impurity." In Hitler Germany "Aryan purity" required the combat against "Jewish impurity"; the "sanctity" of power was not separated from the "impurity" linked to the race excluded from society. Although the current Communist regime has certainly lost something of the sacred allure imprinted on it by Stalin, it is nonetheless true that the brutal politics of the absorption of society by the state would have been inconceivable without the presence of the sanctity-impurity division. The latter was shown in the violent antithesis between the solar cult, devoted to Stalin, and the abjection—denounced by Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress—to which it reduced its real or imagined adversaries. In leaving to his successors the "concentrationary" regime, he showed that, aside from its economic aims, the downfall of some served the rise of others in the name of a mythic philosophy of history of which he was the sole judge.

The historically variable relationships between social structure and political power can be divided between two extreme types which signify schematically the absorption of one by the other. At one pole is found liberal society in which the political power is a delegation of the economically dominant class and in which the state is, through the intermediary of power, a bureaucracy in the service of this class. Here we have an open society, in which economic success means social promotion and which surrounds such success with a sacred aura from which the proletarian class finds itself excluded, not through juridical interdiction, but through the fact of its salaried situation.

At the other pole we place the totalitarian society whose most advanced type is that of communism. Here political power is everything; it has absorbed society and identified each of its members with the function he exercises in the service of the power. Class, with no means of autonomous expression, is not separated from an administratively organized stratum within a vast "apparatus" whose summit culminates along with power. If the analysis of the connections within this apparatus is made difficult

Social Structures and the Power of the State

through the interference of political, economic, and even military functions, such analysis is even more difficult in regard to a social body without autonomous total behavior and in which open horizontal relationships are lacking. "Man does not live by bread alone," a Communist author has written; but we know little of what he does live on and whether he desires to keep for himself a personality alien to his functional role but necessary to his own humanity.

Totalitarian society is closed within itself, as it is closed to the external world. It opens in time only through the intermediary of the power which is the sole motive force impelling its evolution.

Democratic society is separated from liberal society in that it no longer possesses an exogenous class or, in consequence, a sacred institution such as conditioned the existence of liberal society. If the political power undergoes the impulsion of social forces, a process in which it is the heir of liberal power, it is distinguished from the latter by an independence vis-à-vis society which is due to the directing and regulating role of the apparatus of the state. In spite of this, democratic society remains open; it develops largely by virtue of its internal forces, and its structures are in a state of continuous transformation. The possible crystallization of social forces into oligarchies finds its limit in their mutual confrontation, as in the fluidity of the structures.

In distinguishing between man and his function and in providing the possibility of free activity, democratic society differs profoundly from totalitarian society, in which man is confused with function and loses his freedom of self-determination. It differs in the fact that democratic society implies its continuance in permanent question and that it depends in last resort on the consent of its members for the maintenance of the dynamic equilibrium that is its condition of existence. Its evolution depends, indeed, on the most passive of those members.

The eternal or transitory nature of man, the contradiction between his desire to find a firm setting and his temptation to destroy this by another, generally hard to discern, are problems which defy sociological analysis. The dialectics of man and his creations carries in itself the future of societies, but this future is closed by a seal which the imagination alone can break.

ASPECTS OF AFRICAN GROWTH BEFORE A.D. 1500

Not many of the answers, true enough, are known: what is really new in the study of recent African history—the two millennia, let us say, before A.D. 1500—is not so much that the answers are being supplied as that the questions are being put. That in itself is something of a milestone. Few may have denied the eventual possibility of tracing firm outlines for that place and period; all but the merest handful have had other fish to fry. These fish have been, and are, extremely important—as important as the study of human origins through the slow millennia of the Pleistocene or, at the other end of time, as the story of colonial beginnings through the scurried decades of the last century. It is no small thing that Dart, Breuil, Leakey, and their colleagues can now assert with solid evidence behind them that *Homo sapiens* first saw the light in Africa; while in another direction the astonishing continuity of the African story has acquired spectacular emphasis from the recovery in southeast African waters of coelacanth, a most ancient creature whose latest known fossils had occurred in rocks that are older than seventy million years. Compared with that majestic gap in time, the centuries before European preoccupation with Africa may have seemed small and unimportant; they were in any case, and for one reason or another, largely ignored.

They were not completely ignored. Unaccountable ruins, here and there, fed the imagination with possible origins of Ophir and the mines of gold and meadows of gems in which medieval Arabs, beginning to be translated into French and English in the nineteenth century, had written with the verve and spirit of exploring poets. It is just over fifty years since Randall MacIver published his findings on Great Zimbabwe and other Rhodesian ruins—and made perhaps the earliest application of sound archeological method to a purely African site. Intelligent speculation, even before that, had offered glimpses of an African past which was not so mean and lowly as the trekking settlers and concession hunters had understandably supposed from the evidence of magic, nudity, and spears.

Yet it was not until some twenty or thirty years ago that the possibility and the value of knowing pre-European history in Africa south of the Sahara became generally admitted among scholars and interested amateurs. In 1928 the British Association called for another expert assessment of the age of the Southern Rhodesian stone ruins, and a year later Miss Gertrude Caton-Thompson both confirmed MacIver in his general conclusions—that the ruins were medieval in date and Bantu in origin—and collected the material for her *Zimbabwe Culture*, a work of gemlike clarity, literary grace, and classical stature. This set a new standard of quality in the study of recent African proto-history and prehistory in British territories; thus encouraged, others were quick to follow. Little by little there was shadowed forth a body of good evidence: sparse as yet, and very tentative and yet leading always to the possibility of a coherent outline—an outline that is now, at last, beginning to emerge from mere speculation. Thus in 1933 Huntingford could write of a realization “during the last few years . . . that there existed at some period between the Stone Age and medieval times a civilization”—mainly in what are now Kenya and Tanganyika—“which has left traces over a large part of Africa.” Huntingford called this unknown civilization “Azanian” after the word that classical geographers had coined for the East African coast and its immediate hinterland.¹

These “Azanians”—specifically an African people, or comity of peoples, whether of Hamitic or partly Hamitic racial type—have left behind them an imposing network of stone inclosures, stone-enforced hut circles, roads, canals, tumuli, cairns, irrigation works, and wells. Huntingford gave them a tentative date between about A.D. 700 and 1400, and what has subsequently come to light seems to approve the approximate rightness of this

1. G. W. B. Huntingford, *Antiquity*, 1933, p. 153.

dating. Two years later, carrying the story a little further, Leakey examined the newly reported stone city of Engaruka, on the Kenya-Tanganyika border, estimating that "there are about 6,300 houses in the main city . . . [and] the population figure was probably between thirty and forty thousand and I think this may be an underestimate."² Whether or not Engaruka is "post-Azanian"—Leakey thought the ruins were between three hundred and one hundred and fifty years old—they offer another challenging fragment in the mosaic of central Africa's civilizing process in the centuries before European conquest. Others, meanwhile, had already pointed out that skilfully terraced mountain sides could be found as far to the north as Ethiopia³ and as far to the south as the Rhodesian-Mozambique border.⁴

Research in this field has got securely into its stride since the second World War. The pace of discovery is now altogether sharper than before. "We are finding new things every six months," Mathew could tell the second London conference on African history and archeology in 1956. Already, in these postwar years, we are far from the romantic imaginings of earlier times and deep into the subsoil and understructure of the subject. A catalogue of new discoveries within the last ten years would fill many pages; even a list of the names of those who have made and are making these discoveries would be numerous and international. Colonial government, especially in British and French territories, have awakened to the importance of preserving ancient monuments and of appointing skilled men and women to investigate them. The work of the Institut Français de l'Afrique Noire and its distinguished staff is known and admired wherever such matters are discussed, in particular, the indefatigable activity of Th. Monod as head of the Institute. British governments in eastern and central Africa have found the money for the establishment of trained archeological officers; and many important contributions, especially on Stone Age history, have come from scholars in South Africa. Ghana has a chair of archeology at its University College: Africans themselves have begun to sift and study their own past. Thus the Nigerian government, together with the British government and the Carnegie Foundation, have lately combined to provide the respectable sum of £42,000 for research

2. L. S. B. Leakey, *Tanganyika Notes and Records*, 1936, p. 57; H. A. Fosbrooke, *loc. cit.*, 1938, p. 58.

3. R. P. Azais and Chambord, *Cinq années de recherche archéologique en Ethiopie* (1931); C. B. G. Watson, in *Man*, XXVII (1927), 50.

4. G. E. H. Wilson, in *Man*, XXXII (1932), 298; A. Y. Mason, in *South African Journal of Science*, 1933, p. 559.

into the history of the medieval Nigerian kingdom of Benin, and the director of this research is a Nigerian scholar, Dr. Kenneth Dike. The emergence of new nation-states in colonial Africa goes hand in hand with an international endeavor at defining the cultural foundations from which, ultimately, these states will be seen to have taken their rise.

Yet the field is so wide that whole territories still remain little more than a blank on the archeological map. Of Nyasaland, Angola, Mozambique, to mention only three, there is as yet little or nothing to report. All too often, as someone has said, "it is the Public Works Department that stumbles on the object, and prison labor that digs it out." Intensive settlement, here and there, has rubbed away the traces of earlier occupation, completing the erosion that wind and weather and glazing sun have always caused in Africa. In more than one notable case we owe such knowledge of important sites as we may have to the spare-time enthusiasm of otherwise hard-pressed district officers and *commandants de cercles*. It would not seem that there is much ground for complacency; at several points of key importance on the archeological map there is now an urgent need for the promulgation of Ancient Monument orders and the spending of money on elementary preservation. Yet it stays to be recorded, on the credit side, that the worst is over. We are a long way from those high old days of pioneering penetration when a handful of energetic explorers could form an "Ancient Ruins Company Limited" for the sacking of stone ruins in Rhodesia. That company, true enough, was wound up five years after its foundation, in 1900, but it nonetheless had time to explore many of the best Southern Rhodesian sites; and, although it appears to have recovered no more than 500 ounces of gold, "the damage done was immense, for everything except the gold was treated in a most reckless manner."⁵ Not until 1933 and the painstaking and expert investigation by South African scholars of Mapungubwe, an Iron Age site in the northern Transvaal, could some of this damage be made good and the nature of gold and grave goods in these medieval sites become clearly known from actual examples. The position now, by contrast, is that new sites are likely to be carefully reported by anyone who happens on them, and new objects are likely to be sent to experts and museums. Perhaps the most striking proof of this has been the recovery from modern tin workings on the Jos Plateau of Nigeria of anthropomorphic plaster heads in lavish quantity—the "Nok Culture," which Bernard Fagg, admirable curator of the Jos Museum, would date to the first millennium B.C.

5. J. F. Schofield, in *Man*, XXXV (1935), 19.

What outline emerges? In summarizing the evidence at this relatively early stage, it may be more helpful to define what questions are being asked; for it is perhaps the nature of the questions, now, that best defines the present character of the outline. They are not, of course, original questions; they are the questions which have had to be asked of prehistory everywhere else, whether in Europe, in Asia, or in the Americas. They fall into three broad divisions concerning, first, the dating and the course of the Neolithic; second, the dating and course of the age of metals; and, third, the nature and the limits of evolving African societies and civilizations. It is along these three parallel but associated routes into ignorance and myth that research now makes its journey to the sources of African history. If the expeditions are still a long way from their destination, at least their vigorous and various participants are into the wilderness far enough to know that the historical Niger, as it were, flows from west to east and not, as antiquity had generally believed, quite the other way about.

Several great matters are clear enough. It is seen, for example, that the Sahara was densely occupied in Neolithic times but that it became relatively empty of man, and a major and often impassable barrier, at some period after about the fourth millennium B.C. This may have affected the evolving Neolithic in the Nile Valley in the sense of imposing an eastward and a northward drift, so that it may, after all, be true that inland Africa gave the gods to Egypt, and not the other way round. It appears in any case to have robbed the greater part of Africa of those southward-moving influences which might have promoted a true Bronze Age to the south of the great desert. "Climatic and archaeological evidence," Summers has written, "all suggests that Africa south of the Sahara was isolated from the Ancient World during its most formative period, the fourth, third, and second millennia B.C."⁶ Thus it is possible to speak of a Neolithic Age south of the Sahara and also of a Metal Age; but the categories of Copper, Bronze, and Iron lose their application, just as the vastness and diversity of the continent meant that bone, stone, wood, and metal could all be in use and manufacture at the same time and often enough by the same peoples. Does this African Neolithic, even so, show the same pace and direction of growth as the late Stone Age elsewhere? But once again one has to bear in mind the absolutely different conditions under which humanity survived and multiplied in Africa and the sheer magnitude of distance that divided these peoples from the busy urbanity of the Middle

6. R. Summers, in *South African Journal of Science*, September, 1955, p. 43.

East and the Mediterranean. The Neolithic in Africa was specifically an African Neolithic, having its own character and limitations, its own failures and successes, evolving largely out of its own unaided genius.

How and when was the agricultural revolution carried into Africa? And was it necessarily carried *into* Africa? It will be rash to make assumptions. There is plenty to show that the Sahara was no real barrier to countless centuries of migration through the Old Stone Age: *Australopithecine* fossils occur on the Mediterranean coast just as they do in the Union of South Africa, and ancient *Homo sapiens* undoubtedly traveled between the one and the other and no doubt far beyond. "It seems more and more likely," Breuil has written, "that, even from times that are hundreds of thousands of years distant . . . Africa not only knew stages of primitive civilisation that are comparable with those of Europe and Asia Minor, but is also perhaps the origin of these civilisations in the classical countries of the north." If the earliest urban settlement at Jericho is now pushed by carbon-14 test beyond the ending of the seventh millennium B.C., the woodland Nachikufu culture of Northern Rhodesia—transitional between Paleolithic and Neolithic—is placed by the same measure at about 4,000 B.C., and Nachikufu tools included "the weighted digging stick, grindstones, pestles, heavy scrapers, and spokeshaves . . . bone awls and polished adzes";⁷ and all that this appears to say with certainty is that the Neolithic advanced much more rapidly in the Middle East than it did in central Africa. The table of historical precedence is still unsure.

With advancing desiccation of the Sahara, the African continent to the south of it entered upon a long period of relative isolation—*relative*, since there was never a time when cultural drift and occasional migration across the Sahara stopped altogether, but *isolation* because the drift and movement of peoples became rare, spasmodic, muffled in time and space. Thereafter, and perhaps increasingly, the many peoples of Africa were left to their own devices. This helps to explain the astonishing continuity of cultural progression which unites, even now, the Neolithic with the burgeoning blustering industrialism of today. Yet within this continental isolation there is another governing circumstance to be noted: south of the desert the peoples of Africa mingled and intermingled so that the history of the past two or three millennia, when it comes at last to be written, will show a complex cross-fertilization of cultures between west and east and south. Unity and diversity, continuity and isolation—these are the great central themes of African history. If the mining civilizations of the south-

7. J. D. Clark, in *Proceedings of Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory*, 1955, p. 428.

ern plateau, for example, owed a good deal to the stimulus of Indian and Chinese demand for gold and iron and ivory, they owed infinitely more to their progenitors from west and north—from that great area of dispersion of African peoples, whether Bantu-speaking or not, which appears to have lain between Lake Chad and the southern mountains of Ethiopia and to which the contemporary inhabitants of much of central and southern Africa repeatedly, if obscurely, refer their ancient origin. Herein has evidently lain one of the peculiar features of all African development: that south of the desert humanity could find its way with relative ease through every part of the continent and even through the dense forests of the central Congo.

It is this factor of constant movement across many centuries—of the absence of impenetrable barriers—that makes any neat racial classification of African peoples south of the Sahara as meaningless and profitless as the application of chronological periods by type of metal. Some thirty years ago Seligman proposed five primary races of man in Africa: Hamites, Semites, Negroes, Bushmen and Hottentots, and Negritos (or Negrillos). "It would not be very wide of the mark," he thought, "to say that the history of Africa south of the Sahara is no more than the story of the permeation through the ages, in different degrees and at various times, of the Negro and Bushman, aborigines by Hamitic blood and culture"; and today this still seems as much as can usefully be said on the subject. No doubt the Bushmen, Hottentots, and Negritos were the earliest traceable inhabitants of much of Africa; they had probably come from the north, and their former extension "over practically the whole of Africa is shown by the distribution of its relics, especially rock-paintings, skeletal remains, and even place-names." No doubt the Negroes also came from the north, moving in small migrant groups toward the south and west through the uncounted centuries, intermarrying with Bushman and Hottentot, and evolving that numerous and various family, the Bantu, who have taken their name from their related languages. And no doubt the Hamites came the same way; yet "the Hamites entered Africa—or, if the African hypothesis of their origin be maintained, enter Negroland—in a long succession of waves of which the earliest may have been as far back as the end of the pluvial period," and it is precisely the blending of the Hamitic type with the Negro type that has differentiated the Bantu from the true Negro.⁸ I make these points only to emphasize that the decisive factor in African growth over the past several millenniums has been not racial but

8. C. G. Seligman, *Races of Africa* (London: T. Butterworth, Ltd., 1930), p. 15.

environmental. One could emphasize it in a different way by recalling that the latest waves of Hamitic invasion southward from the Horn of Africa—at some time, evidently, not long before A.D. 1400—brought pastoral peoples who overran agricultural peoples but whose superiority of organization was of the same order as that of the Goths in the Roman Empire or, long before, that of the Indo-European invaders of Mohenjodaro and the civilizations of the Indus Valley. It was not, that is to say, the superiority of a more advanced culture. Those who approach a study of the origins of contemporary Africa along race-type lines will raise more problems than they solve.

Today, in any case—and for many hundreds of years it has been the same—it is the Bantu-speaking “racial type” which occupies the greater part of Africa south of the Sahara. Whence did they and their Negro cousins come, and how did they multiply? To pose these questions is to pose the great central theme of human adjustment and survival in these hills and forests and limitless plains. All the evidence suggests, at any rate since late Neolithic times, that mankind has reversed the Palaeolithic migratory trend from south to north. Nearly all the solid body of tribal legend, as well as other evidence, points to a general movement from north to south or else to a complexity of east-west-east movements (coming now into very recent times) whose ultimate springs came probably from a southward-moving impulse. How much reliance may be placed on tribal legend will no doubt vary with time and place; there is no doubt at all that the medieval period brought wave after wave of southward-moving groups and subgroups, and it is to these historically well-attested but recent movements that tribal legend will generally refer. Yet it seems reasonable to conclude that southern, central, and western Africa was largely peopled with its present inhabitants by complex and long-enduring migration from the north. Not, of course, that all the people now living in southern Africa have ancestors who came from the north; we are much more likely in the presence not of massive immigration but of steady drift, adjustment, intermarriage, survival, and multiplication of groups that were initially quite small.

Ancient man, after all, was a rare animal. He lived in numerically insignificant groups. Wherever he multiplied, he moved on because he had to move on, and in this way he gradually spread across the earth through an immensely long time in which his culture scarcely changed. But he multiplied most at those points where he could solve his food problem by new methods; crucially, he solved it by inventing agriculture. He

solved it in this way, no doubt, because conditions made this solution easier than the old alternative of moving on. It may be relevant, for instance, that the sedentary civilizations of Central America should have arisen precisely at those points where conditions were unfavorable for the extension of hunting but favorable for the growing of food. These hunting peoples came down into the bottleneck of Central America and the narrow valleys of the Andes and found, because they had to find, new methods of subsistence. In this respect the valleys of the Euphrates and the Lower Nile were also narrow corridors of great potential fertility. Perhaps this may seem too neat an answer. For Africa, though, it must be part of any answer that there were no true bottlenecks, no narrow corridors, that could not be spread or extended. Short of fish and game at any one place, the early inhabitants must simply have moved elsewhere. And if it is true, as it may be, that temporary conditions created the scarcity that could lend the impulse to invention of agriculture, it is also true that the pressure could never have been long maintained at any one place. It may be that in this absence of long-maintained pressure for economic change at any single place we can detect one of the great limiting circumstances—relative isolation was obviously another—in African development from primitive to less primitive types of social organization.

However that may be, there seems little doubt that ancient man in Africa was relatively rare, as he was in other continents, and that the multiplication of the ancestors of the Negro depended both on discovering agriculture or adapting it to the conditions of rain forest and sunbaked plateau and on learning the use of iron. For iron, just as agriculture before it, lent a new mastery of environment. Of course the suggestion that African peoples could not multiply without the use of iron can be no more than a useful generalization; here and there it was simply not the case. Among the numerous and ingenious Ibo of Southern Nigeria, for instance, living where no iron ore exists, there is an extensive use of wood: "wooden swords, fighting sticks, wooden hoes beside the usual extensive use of wood for domestic utensils and for ceremonies."⁹ Yet the coincidence of iron and relatively advanced Negro societies appears too strong to rest without some intimate connection; the use of iron not only must have improved hunting and hoeing but must also have promoted the growth of those chiefly hierarchies which became, later on, an integral part of much African development. The wood-employing Ibo, we may note, do not have any system of centralized chiefly government; but they

9. M. D. W. Jeffreys, *Proceedings of Third Pan-African Congress on Prehistory*, 1955, p. 255.

live alongside other peoples who do; and one of these peoples, the Yoruba, can look back upon a spectacular use of metal in their social history.

How old is the use of metals in Africa south of the Sahara? We are coming now, no doubt, to some of the vital dates in any consideration of African growth before A.D. 1500. It appears safe to assume that iron was well known in central Africa before the building of Zimbabwe in the eighth century or earlier, and Summers has pointed out that gold-mining began in Southern Rhodesia about A.D. 900. "The Iron Age may have started considerably earlier, perhaps 1500 or more years ago."¹⁰ Writing on the sub-Saharan fringe, Mauny and Hallemans have estimated that "the sub-Saharan world passed slowly from the Neolithic to the age of iron (300 B.C.-100 A.D. approximately)."¹¹ A Greek document of the first century A.D. mentions a regular export of Arabian lances, hatchets, and daggers to the coast of what is now Italian Somaliland and British East Africa.¹² Iron goods from Meroe on the Upper Nile—from what Sayce called "the Birmingham of ancient Africa"—must have gone far south into inland Africa as well; and the piling slag heaps of Meroe probably do not date back to much beyond the first century B.C.

Yet here is a curious thing. Early Iron Age levels in Northern Rhodesia are securely dated to about the first century A.D.¹³ Supposing, as many do, that it was Meroe which introduced the Iron Age to inland Africa, this speed of movement seems improbable unless one is prepared to assume a great capacity for local invention and adjustment. It is worth comparing this early use of iron in central Africa with the story of its passage up the Nile from Lower Egypt. "At Napata"—the early capital of ancient Ethiopia, north of Meroe—"the series of pyramids begins with Kashta, c. 750-744 B.C.; and bronze models are the regular thing until at last after 400 years we reach Pyramid 13, that of Harsiotef c. 397-362 B.C. Here at last iron models are found for the first time among the usual bronze ones."¹⁴ While the earliest scraps of iron found elsewhere at Napata may be as much as two hundred years prior, the full Iron Age of Meroe seems not to have begun until two hundred years later.¹⁵ And yet within two hundred years

10. R. Summers, in *South African Journal of Science*, 1950, p. 95.

11. R. Mauny and J. Hallemans, *Proceedings of Third Pan-African Congress in Prehistory*, 1955, p. 255.

12. *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, trans. Wilfred G. Schoff (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1913), par. 17.

13. Clark, *Proceedings* . . . , and a personal communication to the writer.

14. G. A. Wainwright, *Sudan Notes and Records*, 1945, p. 5.

15. See H. Alimen, *The Prehistory of Africa* (London, 1957), p. 125.

of this latter date the people of Northern Rhodesia, infinitely remote from Meroe, were smelting iron for themselves. Something more than migration or the slow drift of cultural borrowing seems required to explain this.

By the end of the first millennium A.D., in any case, southern Africa was well into its Iron Age. An Arabic compilation dating from the middle of the twelfth century notes the importance of iron exports from southeast Africa. Writing of Sofala (roughly the coast of what is now Mozambique), Edrisi says that the Indian Ocean merchants of that period (Arab, Indian, Indonesian, Chinese) "come here to find iron, which they transport to the continent and to the East Indian islands, where they sell it for a good price, since it is a commodity of great commercial importance and in great demand in India." The iron of Sofala, he explains, was much superior to the iron of India, as well for its abundance as for its quality. "The Indians excel in the art of fabrication," making the best swords in the world from it, for nothing would cut so well. "It is universally recognized, and no one would deny it."

What was the level of African metallurgy? The same writer describes how the "gold of Sofala" was smelted.

The gold that is found in the territory of Sofala surpasses in quantity as in size that of other countries. . . . It is melted in the desert by means of fire fed by cow dung, without which it would be necessary to use mercury for that process, as is done in West Africa; there the inhabitants collect their fragments of gold, mixing them by means of a coal fire, so that the mercury evaporates and nothing remains but the gold, fused and pure. The gold of Sofala does not require that process, but is melted without requiring any device to alter it.

Lastly, Edrisi notes that the people of Sofala made ornaments of copper for themselves.¹⁶ It is true that Edrisi had not been to Sofala himself but that by that time many thousands of Arab merchants had. These Africans, in short, had long entered their metal age. The first millennium A.D. was thus a crucial period of growth in numbers, technology, and social organization; however contrastingly, it set the scene for later growth in central and southern Africa as surely as the same period far to the north would set the scene for medieval Europe.

By the early centuries of the first millennium A.D. there were present, in several regions of Africa, the growing points of Iron Age cultures emerging from a thoroughly indigenous agriculture (which would not,

16. *La Géographie d'Edrisi*, trans. P. A. Joubert (1836), p. 59.

of course, exclude hunting and pastoralism), a widespread use of several metals, and a multiplication of peoples both by migration and by settled increase. There are here some suggestive concordances of date. The earliest Arabic authority for the existence of the sub-Saharan polity of Ghana is El Fazari soon after 800; Ghana, by that time, was not new. "It is almost certain," Biobaku considers, "that the Yoruba migrations from the north-east [elsewhere he makes it clear that he means from Upper Egypt] occurred between 600 and 1,000 A.D."¹⁷ There is a good deal to suggest that the Lacustrine Kingdoms of what is now Uganda took their rise in much the same period, or not much later. The newest carbon-14 dating for Zimbabwe gives a period between about A.D. 500 and about 750 for the initial occupation of the site. Huntingford, as we have seen, thought that the "Azanians" founded their East African civilization in about A.D. 700. Lebeuf and Detourbet consider that the Sao civilization of Lake Chad began at the end of the tenth century—"unless later research pushes that date still farther back."¹⁸ Throughout much of Africa, then, the first millennium of our era brought rapid growth and crystallization.

Thus the first European (and mainly Portuguese) accounts of southern Africa were written at a time when these Iron Age civilizations had some ten centuries of history behind them. It was, of course, the history of illiterate cultures. But if we cannot know what these kingdoms and empires were like from native documentation—except the often distorting documentation of oral tradition—we can infer a good deal from the abundant writings of mariners, merchants, missionaries, and administrators who came out from Europe after the last quarter of the fifteenth century; just as, here and there, we can infer as much or more from earlier Arab writings. It happens that southeastern Africa has an excellent Arab source of the tenth century. This is El Masudi, greatest of the Arab geographers, who drew much of his information on the East African coast from his own journeys and published it shortly before 950. El Masudi describes the people of the gold-bearing region of Sofala as having a strongly organized, animist, pastoral, and agricultural society with a great skill in mining. They were Zendjes, Negroes, and they lived at the ultimate extension of the land of the Negroes, for beyond them was the land of the Wak-Wak (who were possibly Bushmen-Hottentots, although Grottanelli agrees with Ferraud that Wak-Wak was probably Madagascar). Consider El Masudi's account of their kingship.

17. S. O. Biobaku, *Lugard Lectures* (1955).

18. J. P. Lebeuf and A. M. Detourbet, *La Civilisation du Tchad* (Paris: Payot, 1950), p. 175.

For, to return to the Zendjes and their kings, the name of the kings of the land is *Waklimi*, which signifies the son of the Supreme Lord; they so call their sovereign because he has been chosen to govern them equitably. And if he should exercise tyrannical power and depart from the rules of justice, they kill him and bar his posterity from accession to the throne, claiming that, in conducting himself thus, he ceases to be the son of the Lord, which is to say, of the King of Heaven and Earth.¹⁹

Here, in 950, is a picture of some of those African kingship characteristics that would be noted by modern anthropology a thousand years later. Evans-Pritchard wrote of that people of the Upper Nile in 1948:

We can only understand the place of kingship in Shilluk society when we realize that it is not the individual at any time reigning who is king, but *Nyikang* who is the medium between man and God and is believed in some way to participate in God as he does in the king. . . . Our authorities say that the Shilluk believe that should the king become physically weak the whole population might suffer, and, further, that if a king becomes sick or senile he should be killed to avoid some grave national misfortune, such as defeat in war, epidemic, or famine. The king must be killed to save the kingship and with it the whole Shilluk people.²⁰

If the "divine kingship" of inland Africa really derived from Meroe, and not the other way round, then it had long reached far into the south by the year 950.

The striking thing which emerges from all these early writings is, in any case, the high degree of adjustment and invention which these Iron Age civilizations could show. Whatever they may have borrowed from the north, across the centuries behind them, they had become specifically African. They had grown into their environment. Thus, although their feudalism appeared so European to the early Portuguese, who hastened to introduce them to the felicities of aristocratic rank, there is no doubt that it was always a peculiarly African feudalism, profoundly influenced by Negro habits of thought. The chiefly hierarchies seldom became autocracies; and oligarchy was normally controlled by the democracy of tribal custom. In the kingdoms of the Lower Congo the Portuguese found that "the King of Loango was obliged to marry a princess of the royal blood of Kakongo, while the Mani of Kakongo had earlier had to choose from a princess of the royal blood of Congo."²¹ Yet it was of these same

19. El Masudi, *Les Prairies d'or*, trans. C. Barbier de Meynard (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1864), III, 29.

20. E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Divine Kingship of the Shilluk of the Nilotic Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948), pp. 7 and 18.

21. A. Ihle, *Das Alte Königreich Kongo* (Leipzig-Engelsdorf: C. & E. Vogel, 1929), p. 23.

peoples that another Portuguese writer, even as late as 1837, after the degeneration of three hundreds years of oversea slaving at its worst, could write that "the government of 'Bailundu' is democratic. These heathen mix with the infamous humiliations of the orientals the unbridled coarseness of the English people at election times in England. The kings defer to and flatter their counsellors; these are they who elevate a king to the throne and also cast him down."²²

Oral tradition has much to add. Thus the oral literature of the old Ugandan kingdoms has the story of an ancient farming people who were conquered by a cattle-keeping people "from the north." These invading Bahima and sedentary Bairu—Hamite and Bantu, no doubt, by racial type—continued to live together; the weaker were not exterminated.

The Bahima chose to dominate the Bairu because it paid to dominate. Although the agricultural technique of the Bairu did not produce a great surplus, it could produce, under pressure, enough beer and millet to make domination profitable. . . . The Bahima, then as now, lived upon their cattle and forced their serfs to give them as much beer, millet, and labor as possible without destroying their source of supply.²³

This was the amalgam which produced the massive earthworks of western Uganda with their great ditches and inclosing walls—ditches that are still nineteen feet deep at some places.²⁴ And, although these conquerors tried hard to maintain their supremacy—forbidding intermarriage with their subject Bairu, forbidding Bairu to own productive cows—history was too strong for them; and gradually the two merged into one and produced the historical kingdoms of Uganda, which now, in our day, cross the threshold of a new independence.

It was evidently much the same with the strong-knit cultures of the southern plateau. They too appear to have evolved, some time in the middle of the first millennium, from the fertilizing process of invasion by stronger groups from the north, by the settlement and fusion of these groups with indigenous peoples, and by cattle-keeping, agriculture, and mining—this last being greatly stimulated by increasing demand for iron, gold and ivory from the other countries of the Indian Ocean and from China. Unluckily for them, the Portuguese arrived in a period of dynastic

22. G. M. Childs, *Umbundu Kinship and Character* (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1949), p. 61.

23. K. Oberg, in *African Political Systems*, ed. M. Fortes and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (London: Oxford University Press, H. Milford, 1940), p. 126.

24. G. Mathew, in *Antiquity*, 1953, p. 215.

collapse and upheaval. Injecting small military expeditions after the middle of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese were gradually able to secure the upper hand and destroy the slow fruit of hundreds of years of social and economic growth.

Light on the nature of these southern civilizations was gained from the excavation of the Northern Transvaal site of Mapungubwe in 1933-35.²⁵ Here at last it was possible to examine the graves of a ruling class or caste and to find, along with porcelain from China and beads from India and Indonesia and gold ornaments of local workmanship, the evidence for ruler and ruled that could give this medieval site its comparison with feudalism elsewhere. A little farther to the north, on the border which separates Southern Rhodesia from Mozambique, the imposing forts and terraces and pit circles of Inyanga-Penhalonga add another chapter to the story. Here one may see the same skill and stubbornness in the use of stone that Huntingford and Leakey and others have noted for the stone ruins of Kenya and Tanganyika. "The walling both of the terraces and of the buildings connected with them," Summers has recorded, "looks at first sight rough and unfinished, but further acquaintance with it reveals its finer points and leaves one in no doubt about the skill of builders who with the greatest economy of labor regularly used boulders weighing anything up to a ton for their building."²⁶ The population was evidently much larger than it is now, for, although the countryside is watered, the Inyanga people found it necessary to evolve their own system of irrigation—just as the people of Engaruka, far to the north, were probably doing at about the same time. MacIver noted of Inyanga fifty years ago that

the stream was tapped at a point near its source, and part of the water deflected by a stone dam. This gave them a high-level conduit, by which the water could be carried along the side of a hill and allowed to descend more gradually than the parent stream. There are very many conduits in the Inyanga region, and they often run for several miles. The gradients are admirably calculated, with a skill that is not always equalled by modern engineers with their elaborate instruments. The dams are well and strongly built of unworked stones without mortar.²⁷

The numerous stone ruins of Great Zimbabwe can show an earlier use of the same skill and power of organization.

Such were the fruits of growth over a thousand years of relative isolation.

25. L. Fouché, *Mapungubwe: Ancient Bantu Civilisation on the Limpopo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1937).

26. R. Summers, in *Antiquity*, 1952, p. 73.

27. R. MacIver, *Mediaeval Rhodesia* (1906), p. 12.

tion from the outside world; not chaos, not stagnation, not stunted incapacity, but a continuous and complex advance toward centralized government and the intensive exploitation of environment. In terms of social organization and individual adjustment to society—at any rate, up to the eleventh century—it may be hard to claim that the more advanced of these medieval African civilizations were in any inherent sense inferior to their counterparts in Europe. The cultural gap, whenever it really existed, was narrow and not broad. But then, of course, the factor of isolation played its part; the rapidly interacting polities of Europe advanced swiftly after the eleventh century, so that by the time of European discovery the material and technical gap was a good deal wider. Thereafter followed the black centuries of oversea slaving and of conquest, and the gap widened into an abyss. What may, after all, be found to be most interesting, as speculation hardens into certainty, is not that the cultural gap between Europe and Africa grew wide but that the growth of civilization in Africa could nonetheless overcome its isolation and evolve, out of its own genius, so steadily and so far.

ROMANTICISM AND STOICISM IN
THE AMERICAN NOVEL: FROM
MELVILLE TO HEMINGWAY,
AND AFTER

The origins of the American mentality bear the imprint of a "tabula rasa pattern" which the *Mayflower's* Pilgrim Fathers brought with them to the shores of Massachusetts. To the Puritan conscience, the founding of English colonies on the virgin soil of North America seemed a complete departure, the first step in the establishment of a new society. It was an incredible experience, marked by infinite hope, and one toward which, according to one American historiographer, "the eyes of God, of the world, and of posterity were turned." The dream and the hope recurred from generation to generation; during the course of the centuries millions of emigrants, settling between the Atlantic and the Pacific, sought a better world than they had known.

Hope abounding with optimism, an infinity of aspiration, dreams of perfection—such was the romantic principle that animated the spirit of these people so readily accused of materialism. For the paradox is ap-

Translated by Elaine P. Halperin.

parent. The European intellectual has mocked the American way of life frequently enough; one detects an element of envy in his sarcasm. It would be only fair to acknowledge that this prosperous, comfortable, and deliberately ostentatious way of life (or, if you prefer, this lack of style) is the most palpable and also the most vulgar materialization of a dream which the ragged, the persecuted, the "have-nots" from Ireland, Italy, Poland, or other centers of European poverty cannot be blamed for sharing. With the poverty went also oppression. In the minds of those who founded and then peopled it, America had to be the anti-Europe. A new society had to be built upon the virgin continent, one that would not only be generally prosperous but also perfectly free, perfectly happy, perfectly democratic—a society which would embody the City of God as modified by the contributions of the Enlightenment. This dream of moral and social perfection is a distinctly American utopia. Its vitality can be measured by the violence of the reaction that invariably followed the impact which actual experience of human limitations has had on the naïveté of this romantic hope.

Political and social criticism in the American novel has become a constant whose beginnings go back to Fenimore Cooper. At one time United States consul at Lyon, the creator of Natty Leatherstocking and of so many heroes of our young years signalized the plain and virile virtues of the pioneers; he praised the republican spirit and the democratic institutions of his country. After a seven-year absence he observed that in its daily reality the star-spangled republic did not correspond exactly to the ideal image he had formed of it. Between 1834 and 1838 he published six books in which he vituperated against American society and the American mentality with as much vigor as he had formerly employed to exalt it.

But this tendency toward excessive denunciation is principally apparent in the American novel of the twentieth century. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of the works of Upton Sinclair, Sinclair Lewis, John Dos Passos, John Steinbeck, and many others. By comparison with these vitriolic books, Ilya Ehrenburg's *Le Dégel* is about as virulent as the *Adventures of Telemachus*. It would be a grievous error to see in this passionate self-criticism an indication of Communist orientation. Although writers themselves occasionally shared this delusion, their protest was always essentially libertarian. A dictatorship of the proletariat has never been part of the American dream, which reposes, above all, upon freedom and justice.

However, this dream of perfection has a third, more noble, and more

individualist dimension which transcends the domain of material and social life and elevates one to an ethical and metaphysical view of man's condition and his destiny. In contrast to the heritage that extends from the later novels of Fenimore Cooper to the first works of John Steinbeck, there is another which, stretching from Herman Melville to Robert Penn Warren, also illustrates, although in a different sphere, the process of action and reaction that derives from the American romantic principle.

To be sure, this third current springs from the deepest proclivities of the American soul. But it also has literary sources. We must remember that during the second quarter of the last century American literature was formed under the aegis of European romanticism. Fenimore Cooper embarked upon his literary career with the ambition of becoming the American Walter Scott. But Scott's exoticism is but an adventitious and superficial aspect of the romantic inspiration. In its highest manifestations romanticism is the result of a metaphysical need, marked by a firm resolution to abolish the narrow limits which the rationalist and empiricist eighteenth century had assigned to human experience. At the core of romanticism is *Sehnsucht*, the spiritual yearning for the plenitude of the absolute.

The works of Herman Melville are connected with this romanticism. It is true that his first novels are clearly part of the heritage of the exotic adventure popularized by Scott and Cooper. But already, in a tale that seems as simple and pleasant as *Typee* (1846), analysis uncovers a basic ambiguity that reveals the metaphysical anguish. If we recall the odyssey of the hero-narrator who deserts his whaler in order to seek refuge in a paradisaic island, peopled by gentle cannibals, and if we dwell on the bewitching descriptions of nature and society intimately harmonized in an Edenic way of life, we might find illogical and contradictory the horror and contempt of the hero and his companions for the white man who deliberately adapted himself to this life—the "renegade from Christendom and humanity." And we remain perplexed when the hero flees again. He leaves the island and all its seductions in order to resume service on board another whaler which is probably no different from the first. This strange alternation between enthusiasm and repulsion can scarcely be explained by the duality of inspiration and aspiration that was to mark all of Melville's work. To use the Nietzschean vocabulary, the writer is obviously divided between an Apollonian impulse which attracts him to the fulness of nature provided by the island and a Dionysian impulse that

pulls him toward a world of uncertainty, struggle, and grandeur represented by his destiny as a traveler on the high seas.

Melville was aware of the profound symbolism of this duality, and he knew the danger of this Dionysian *Sehnsucht* to which, however, his hero yields. He wrote:

Consider them both, the sea and the land; and do you not find a strange analogy to something in yourself? For as this appalling ocean surrounds the verdant land, so in the soul of man there lies one insular Tahiti, full of peace and joy, but encompassed by all the horrors of the half-known life. God keep thee! Push not off from that isle, thou canst never return.¹

Perhaps this inner Tahiti is what we might today call the American way of life. In any case it represents the comfortable life and the sweetest peace of mind. It embodies all the pleasures that Melville has enumerated elsewhere: "security, comfort, hearth, supper, warm blankets, and also all that is sweet to mortal minds." The paradox is this: although praising an existence replete with small pleasures, Melville did not fail to realize that the "peace" and "joy" of this life are of inferior quality. And so he chose to explore the immensity of the "appalling ocean," of a "half-known life," the perilous immensity of moral and spiritual life. And the maritime exoticism of pursuing the whale soon became for him merely a means of symbolizing a different kind of quest, one far more important and dangerous.

Perhaps without knowing it, Melville was here undertaking a voyage to the outer edge of the night. In the two great novels of his mature years, *Moby Dick* (1851) and *Pierre* (1852), he has left us two accounts of it, one symbolical, the other realistic.

Whatever the precise nature of the internal adventure symbolized by Captain Ahab's expedition (and we know that *Moby Dick* is so complex a book, so rich, so profound, and so obscure that it has proved to be almost as fertile in possible explanations as life itself), it is nonetheless clear that Melville attempted to incarnate in it a spiritual and moral yearning that transcends the powers of man. To the extent that this novel can be viewed as a tragedy, Ahab's tragic defect is a *hubris* that impels him to offend against his own nature in order to undertake a superhuman task; this is the Aristotelian *ἀμαρτία*, the essential element of tragedy which springs from a disproportion between man's desires and his means. Ahab's desire seems to be both supernatural, because of its object, and demoniacal, because of

1. Quoted in W. E. Sedgwick, *Herman Melville: The Tragedy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945), p. 33.

the insane pride which it evidences. And the drama of human nature is this: that the will to struggle without compromise against absolute evil should harbor in itself something satanic.

This pathetic awareness of the limitations of our human condition is more clearly apparent in *Pierre*. Perhaps too clearly, for the melodramatic intrigue of this not too well-known book does not measure up to the high requirements of the moral theme. The hero, Pierre Glendinning, is the spoiled and only son of a rich widow; he is engaged to marry a young girl of excellent family. One day he makes the acquaintance of another young girl, Isabelle, and discovers that she is his illegitimate half-sister. Convinced that it is his duty to protect Isabelle without bringing dishonor upon his father's memory, Pierre marries her and seeks refuge in New York. Pursued by the festering rage of his family, he kills his cousin; his mother and ex-fiancée are brokenhearted and die; Pierre and Isabelle, having fallen in love with each other, commit suicide in their prison.

It would be well not to dwell upon the somewhat Elizabethan aspect of this somber tale. At any rate it serves the purpose of casting a useful light upon the total significance of Melville's work. The element in *Pierre* which corresponds to the dominant hope that governs Captain Ahab's odyssey is an ardent thirst for absolute justice. They both seek, each in his own way, the absolute—an absolute which perhaps cannot be found. Melville says this plainly in *Pierre*:

In those Hyperborean regions, to which enthusiastic Truth, and Earnestness, and Independence, will invariably lead a mind fitted by nature for profound and fearless thought, all objects are seen in a dubious, uncertain, and refracting light. Viewed through that rarefied atmosphere the most immemorially admitted maxims of men begin to slide and fluctuate, and finally become wholly inverted. . . .

But the example of many minds forever lost, like undiscoverable Arctic explorers, amid those teacherous regions, warns us entirely away from them; and we learn that it is not for man to follow the trail of truth too far, since by so doing he entirely loses the directing compass of his mind; for arrived at the Pole, to whose barrenness only it points, there, the needle indifferently respects all points of the horizon alike.²

Melville's heroes, who serve as his spokesmen, are divided between an attainable perfection but one without value because it is to be found solely at the level of nature and a perfection that is sound because it belongs to a moral and spiritual order but which man cannot achieve because of his essentially imperfect and limited nature.

2. Herman Melville, *Pierre, or the Ambiguities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), p. 184.

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

Thus Melville's probing results, first of all, in the rediscovery of the fundamental paradox of man's condition. But it is not limited to this. Just as the apprehension of a necessarily imperfect reality engenders a spirit of virulent, even of excessive criticism among social novelists, so, in Melville, the metaphysical novelist, idealism is transmuted into nihilism under the impact of a truth which defies his efforts. Bitterly disappointed, frustrated in the hope that sustained him, his initial *Sehnsucht* fades away in the conviction that life is a story full of sound and fury and devoid of meaning:

What man who carries a heavenly soul in him, has not groaned to perceive, that unless he committed a sort of suicide as to the practical things of this world, he never can hope to regulate his earthly conduct by that same heavenly soul? . . .

And where is the earnest and righteous philosopher, gentlemen, who looking right and left, and up and down, through all the ages of the world, the present included; where is there such an one who has not a thousand times been struck with a sort of infidel idea, that whatever other worlds God may be Lord of, he is not the Lord of this.³

If we have lingered somewhat over Melville, it is, first of all, because he deserves it; his work is America's first serious contribution to universal literature. But we have also done so because he sheds light on the genesis of a nihilism that is today widespread in the American novel and that is frequently mistaken to be something original, whereas, in reality, it springs from a terribly disillusioned idealism.

The first works of novelists in whom the authentic tradition of Melvillian nihilism is revived—William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Robert Penn Warren—impressed both the public and the critics with their negative aspects: an obsession with horror and violence, a rejection of all the commonly accepted values, a sense of chaos, a predilection for brutal and stupefying sensations which obliterate conscience and will. One can even go so far as to say that for many years nothing more was to be found in Faulkner's and Hemingway's novels and short stories.

But the time is past when Faulkner can be considered the leader of a "school of cruelty," of gratuitous obscenity and horror, or when Hemingway's writings can be classified under the heading of "alcoholic novels," as Coindreau has done. An important article published in the *Kenyon Review* in 1939 established without question that Faulkner "is really a traditional moralist, in the best sense," and that Hemingway's writings during the course of the last years place his inspiration in a similar light.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

Of course one cannot deny that Faulkner and Hemingway present us with the image of a world plunged into neglect and spiritual destitution, given over to the forces of evil. They stress the most repugnant aspects of the real and display an endless cynicism and an absolute pessimism. Never was nihilism expressed with as much force or talent. But what matters is that these authors do not wallow in mud for the perverse pleasure of it; their nihilism is not the primary element. It is—and all the contemporary critics concur in this—the result of a psychological traumatization—the clash between naïveté and experience, the destruction of the ideal by the real.

We must also concede that the ideal is hardly perceptible in their works. This is because its evolution took place according to the crazy rhythm that characterizes our times. While Melville, during the course of a long and painful intellectual odyssey, had come to adopt a dark vision of the world, the twentieth-century novelists seem to have been sensitized to violence and corruption even before they began to write. Recollections of the Civil War, the accelerated industrialization of the country, the spread of a mercantile spirit, the injustices of hypercapitalism and the two world wars—all these destroyed the hope of someday realizing the old American dream of a perfect society. This dream has persisted in the hearts of men, nonetheless, like a standard ruler with which to measure reality. The permanence of the romantic principle manifests itself solely in frenzy or bitterness, which, to European wisdom, often seems excessive; or it is evident in some minor aspect of the works themselves: particularly, in Faulkner, in certain idealized evocations of the South before the Civil War or during the initial stages of the evolution of a Hemingway character who, before becoming a disillusioned dypsomaniac, had been an intelligent and sensitive young man, capable of deep feelings and unselfish idealism.

This aspect of contemporary nihilism—with its origins in an integral idealism—is far more perceptible in the best novelist of the generation that followed Faulkner and Hemingway, Robert Penn Warren. *World Enough and Time*, one of Warren's most ambitious books, contains fundamental analogies with Melville's *Pierre*. Here, too, we have to do with a generous man of uncompromising idealism who would like to become the instrument of absolute justice by re-establishing his wife's honor. Like Pierre Glendinning, he is drawn by that superhuman *hubris* into a horrible vortex of lies, intrigues, and moral degradation. Impelled by the highest aspirations, he is gradually pushed toward the most disillusioned

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

conclusions: the conviction that the primary crime "is the crime of self, the crime of life. The crime is I."

A century separates *Pierre* and *World Enough and Time*. But, despite the extraordinary evolution of thought and society that has taken place during this period, there is a striking similarity between the two books. Both of them dramatize an agonizing awareness of man's fate. Both begin with the noblest ideal only to end in total negation. Both illustrate the same thesis: hope and ambition beyond the bounds of human possibilities, the clash with the real against which the ideal is shattered, the pitiless logic of internal disintegration. An obvious correlation exists between the insane morbidity of *Pierre* and the most striking, and also the most contagious, aspects of the contemporary novel. In both instances the point of departure is the romantic principle of the dream of perfection; and the clash between the ideal and the real, instead of giving rise to a compromise based upon the actual possibilities of human nature, disintegrates into despair and nihilism.

Nihilism is not a rule of life. It is a rule of death—and not only in fiction. Pierre Glendinning's suicide foreshadows the self-destructive gestures of so many overly sensitive and overly intelligent young Americans like Harry Crosby, the poet Hart Crane, and Kenneth Raibeck, who inspired Thomas Wolfe in *You Can't Go Home Again*; it reminds us of Scott Fitzgerald, who deliberately precipitated his own disintegration by alcoholism, or of people closer to us in time, like Virginia Woolf, Stefan Zweig, and F. O. Matthiessen, who could not stand to go on living in a world that so cruelly displayed its absence of meaning. On the other hand, if Faulkner, Hemingway, and Warren are still alive, if Melville did not commit suicide, it is because nihilism is no more their final word than it was their initial stage. And here again Melville's inner evolution is unquestionably valuable as a prototype.

After a serious moral and intellectual depression following the publication of *Pierre*, Melville wrote a series of short stories which offer invaluable indications of his desire to find a meaning in life. Most of these stories have been exhumed recently from the dusty archives into which Melville had relegated them. He did not prize them, and he was not mistaken. Their artistic worth, save for a few exceptions, is very slight. Nevertheless, as documents, they are not without interest. They show us a Melville at grips with so urgent and complex an intellectual problem that he is unable to give these stories satisfactory form.

This problem is formulated in an allegorical and perfectly clear manner in a series of sketches which Melville was inspired to write by a visit he paid to the Galapagos Islands more than ten years earlier. Wild and solitary, these islands, which Melville ironically calls the "enchanted isles," are like the forlorn world into which the author feels he is plunged. "In no world but a fallen one," he wrote, "could such lands exist." In the Encantadas the sterility of life, the failure of the world and of man, are made palpable. And with pitiless clarity we are faced with the question of whether life on this vast earth can have any value or significance.

In a revealing sketch about the tortoises, almost the only inhabitants of these desolate islands, Melville gives us his answer, albeit in an indirect and oblique manner. In the Melvillian symbolism, these tortoises are curiously related to the heroes of the great novels, Captain Ahab and Pierre Glendinning. This is apparent in the following passage. Melville meditates as he listens to the movements of three giant tortoises that were captured by the crew and are crawling along the bridge above his head:

Their stupidity or their resolution was so great, that they never went aside for any impediment. One ceased his movements altogether just before the mid-watch. At sunrise I found him butted like a battering-ram against the immovable foot of the foremast, and still striving, tooth and nail, to force the impossible passage. That these tortoises are the victims of a penal, or malignant, or perhaps a downright diabolical enchanter, seems in nothing more likely than in that strange infatuation of hopeless toil which so often possesses them. I have known them in their journeyings ram themselves heroically against rocks, and long abide there, nudging, wriggling, wedging, in order to displace them, and so hold on their inflexible path. Their crowning curse is their drudging impulse to straightforwardness in a belittered world.⁴

Obviously, the last sentence is the key to the symbol. But what should be noted here, and, furthermore, what impressed Melville, was that this "impulse to straightforwardness," in which we recognize the "curse" that was Ahab's and Pierre's undoing, does not impel the tortoises toward destruction. On the contrary, one might say that in Melville's eyes this obstinacy, however vain it might be as regards its own finality, enabled them to transcend time:

The great feeling inspired by these creatures was that of age:—dateless, indefinite endurance. And in fact that any other creature can live and breathe as long as the tortoise of the Encantadas, I will not readily believe. Not to hint of their known

4. *The Encantadas or Enchanted Isles*, in Herman Melville, *Selected Tales and Poems*, ed. Richard Chase (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1950), p. 238.

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

capacity of sustaining life, while going without food for an entire year, consider that impregnable armor of their living mail. What other bodily being possesses such a citadel wherein to resist the assaults of Time?⁵

One can almost say, if such a comparison is possible, that the tortoises of Galapagos are also the exact opposite of Ahab and Pierre. What constitutes the grandeur of these two Melvillian heroes is their unrelenting aggressiveness: Ahab pursues Moby Dick, Pierre defies society. But the tortoises are content to "resist the assaults of Time"; it is their "indefinite endurance" that constitutes their grandeur.

In another story Melville gives us an idea of what this signifies on the human plane. He tells how, in the course of his travels, he found a woman who had been left on an island with her husband and brother by a French whaler that was supposed to pick them up a few months later. The captain forgot his promise, the two men died, and Hunilla lived alone for three months on the chalky island crags. The victim of a "feline Fate" that crushed her beneath the weight of deceit and false hopes, Hunilla nonetheless maintained her courage, her will to subsist—in short, her "endurance." And this is what Melville admires. He exclaims: "Humanity, thou strong thing, I worship thee, not in the laureled victor, but in this vanquished one."⁶

This exclamation enables us to measure the distance traversed by the author from *Moby Dick* and *Pierre*. The old dream of perfection is no longer what attracts him: he has seen through its ambiguity and emptiness. He is seeking to evaluate the true stature of a human being rather than to attain an ideal grandeur. He finds true grandeur in the principle of immortality that is essentially a capacity to resist the assaults of time and destiny. People like Hunilla are similar to the tortoises of the Galapagos Islands in several significant respects. To begin with, we might say that their condition is rudimentary. In addition, they are abandoned and solitary; they are stripped of everything that man traditionally glories in; they subsist in utter destitution and neglect. But they do subsist. Their primary, fundamental, and, in a way, unique quality is obstinacy, endurance, an indomitable and unconscious will not to abdicate in the face of malediction. This new conception of human dignity is quite different from the proud *hubris* which Ahab and Pierre represent. The new Melvillian hero is not valued for the magnitude of his purpose or the superhuman greatness of his aims. He is worthy and human to the extent that he does

5. *Ibid.*, p. 237.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 267.

not allow himself to be carried away by chimerical aspirations and to the extent that he accepts his destiny without ever despairing. It is stoicism, but an altogether American stoicism, modified by the virile contributions of pioneer frontiersmen. Because what the new Melvillian hero attains is not that *ataraxia* of the Stoics—invulnerability through detachment. He suffers, but he persists. In frivolous terms one might say that what makes him distinctive is his capacity "to take it."

It could be that the twentieth-century conscience, as expressed in the novel, feels the need, as did Melville, of removing itself from the deadly maelstrom of nihilism. Surrounded by forces which man himself has loosed and which he is not sure of being able to control, once again he feels weak, delicate, and powerless, just as he did in the days when he wandered half-naked and defenseless in the hostile forests of prehistory. Threatened on all sides, skeptical and unhappy, he is concerned with finding a remedy, or at least a palliative, for the altogether too obvious precariousness of his fate. For a quarter of a century writers like Charles Morgan and Aldous Huxley have pictured contemporary man in quest of some impenetrable refuge in the upper zones of an ethereal and, at times, nebulous spirituality.

However, the second World War seems to have dealt a deathblow to this desire for an internal invulnerability rooted in detachment. The modern hero no longer has anything in common with the highly cultivated and comfortably frugal apprentice-teachers that Morgan and Huxley described. Like Hunilla, he is an elemental human being, abandoned, despoiled, and crushed. And the novel of today is peopled with characters like these, stripped of the graciousness of heart and adornments of the mind that used to proclaim man's superior position. The modern hero is the unworthy priest of Graham Greene's *The Power and the Glory* or Hemingway's reviled war veteran, or Faulkner's idiot. On the screen he is Gelsomina in *La Strada*.

Yet, though our contemporary novel is deliberately centered in characters such as these, the purpose is not at all to reduce humanity to the level of the beast. It would be a mistake to believe that the contemporary novelist, impelled by heavens knows what *Schadenfreude*, delights in illustrating the fragility of human vanities or the degradation of which man is capable. Actually, the opposite is true. If nowadays the novelist denudes man of the adventitious finery on which was formerly based an awareness of his nobility, he does so in order to find something more dependable, to discover the solid pedestal on which the sentiment of human dignity can be

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

established without any uncertainty, to discern some modicum of inalienable and secure value in even the roughest, lowest, and most neglected areas of humanity.

The despair and disgust that abound in parts of the works of the two greatest American novelists of this century, Faulkner and Hemingway, manifest the violence of their disappointment when the dream and reality meet. But in the writings of their second period, during the last fifteen years or so, this negative note has gradually diminished and given way to a fresh manner of looking at man and life.

During an interval of about twenty-five years, Faulkner published a novel, *Sanctuary* (1929), and a play, *Requiem for a Nun* (1953), that center in two phases of the career of an identical character. But each of these works also illustrates a stage in the career of the writer. *Sanctuary* traces the moral disintegration of an eighteen-year-old college girl, Temple Drake. It is hardly necessary to give a detailed analysis of this well-known novel, which springs in part from all the currents of disillusionment and morbidity that constitute contemporary nihilism. In *Requiem for a Nun* we encounter Temple again, now a wife and the mother of a family, but still corrupt. It is significant that the instrument of her salvation is an old Negro prostitute, Nancy Mannigoe, to whom Temple has attached herself. Temple's redemption is accomplished in two stages: first, in order to prevent the young woman from abandoning her family and returning to a life of debauchery, Nancy resorts to the only efficacious remedy because it is the worst: she kills Temple's child. Then, having inflicted this horrible trauma upon the young woman and forced her thus to see things in a new perspective, Nancy completely accepts the punishment inflicted upon her for her crime. At the end of the play this acceptance and the extraordinary spirit of sacrifice which it attests cause Temple to turn to Nancy. As the old Negress readies herself for the hanging, Temple humbly asks her what she should do in order to recover peace of mind.

Robert Penn Warren has remarked that "the actual role of the Negro in Faulkner's fiction is consistently one of pathos or heroism." We wonder if it is not even more than this; if, in fact, the Negro might not be the true Faulknerian hero. What the writer says of Sam Fathers in his short story entitled "The Bear" applies to all the Negro characters in his books: he is "the descendant of a long line of people who learned humility through suffering and pride through endurance that survived suffering." The verb "to endure," which means both to suffer and to last, is a key word in Faulkner precisely because of this double meaning. And these

Negroes are among "the humble and the invincible of the earth," as the author's spokesman, the lawyer Gavin Stevens, says. In another short story he meditatively adds: "to endure and endure and then endure, tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow." This capacity to last by enduring, to accept suffering patiently and thus to conquer resentment while never ceasing to feel it, is the essential characteristic of the dignity of these Negro heroes. They are bound to the soil of the South by this trait. Faulkner has a veritable cult for the South—"God's long fecund, remorseless acres which would outlast any corruption and injustice." This trait makes his Negro heroes a model for all humanity. And if we should need an explicit statement on the universal significance of the Negro characters in Faulkner's works, we need only recall these few words of the message from Stockholm: "Man is immortal because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion, of sacrifice and of *endurance*." Compassion and sacrifice are already superior values, but the primary one is endurance, that stoic confrontation of destiny in which Faulkner's Negroes so often remind us of Hunilla and of Melville's tortoises.

In a sense Hemingway is even closer to Melville than Faulkner because his heroes, too, are solitary people. It is curious that Hemingway also published two works during a twenty-five-year interval that lend themselves admirably to comparison. The American critic Delmore Schwartz observed recently that "Hemingway's sixth novel [*The Old Man and the Sea*] contains almost the same thesis as *The Undeclared* (1927) . . . and the old fisherman who hasn't caught anything for eighty-four days is in the same situation as the aging matador of that story." Yet the two works leave the reader with diametrically opposite impressions. The story of the matador, Manuel, is pathetic and depressing: it narrates the finish of a man; it is the symbol of the ineluctable decline of human things. As for *A Farewell to Arms*, it is an illustration of the bitterness with which Hemingway judged life. He wrote:

If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. . . . It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.⁷

Manuel is precisely one of the "very brave." The *corrida* is his *raison d'être*, the meaning of his life. He dies because he refuses to abdicate. But his stoical heroism is placed within the usual context of Hemingway's

7. Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), p. 267.

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

nihilism: the selfish cynicism of those who organize the *corrida*, the sly cruelty of the crowd, the frightfulness of an unequal contest—all this makes the story an imaginative illustration of the futility of heroism, the uselessness of human courage. Therefore the title, *The Undeclared*, is ambiguous, if not plainly ironic.

The story of Santiago, the fisherman, is pathetic, too, but it is also strangely exciting. Perhaps the reason for this is the extreme bareness of both the story and the character. Like Melville's heroes, Santiago is solitary: alone in confronting nature, alone in confronting his destiny, alone in his misfortune. He exists on the most elementary level: he owns almost nothing, he scarcely eats. Above all, he has no illusions. Having none, he does not yield to despair. Living on hope, he says: "It is silly not to hope. Besides I believe it is a sin." He simply does his duty, a duty that corresponds to his nature as a fisherman. "It is better to be lucky," he says, "But I would rather be exact. Then when luck comes you are ready." This constitutes his hope: to conquer misfortune and the malignity of fate by the elementary strength of patience and endurance.

Santiago's eminent dignity resides in these strengths and in his courageous acceptance and refusal to despair or recriminate. In this he is akin to Faulkner's Negroes and to Melville's abandoned characters. He is one of those "vanquished ones" in whom it is possible to "worship" the "strength" of humanity.

We see in Faulkner, in Hemingway, and in Melville an evolution whose point of departure is an impossible dream of moral and spiritual perfection. This evolution traverses a period of violent despair and morbid nihilism to culminate in a stoical wisdom marked by a positive and manly acceptance of reality. Delmore Schwartz, speaking of Hemingway, writes that "the transition from illusion to steadfast hope, while passing through various stages of disillusion, represents the profound affective and spiritual progress accomplished by the novelist during the thirty years of his career." This is also true of Melville; it is incontrovertible that the inner experience of the author of *Moby Dick* was to foreshadow that of Faulkner and Hemingway. All three incarnate a kind of archetype, and such a parallelism certainly justifies one in asking another question: Does this remarkable similarity embrace these individuals alone, or is it related in some way to their common nationality? It is perhaps no exaggeration to hold that their inner evolution is representative and corresponds to an evolution of American sensitivity, insofar as this can be reflected in a novel.

The typical novel of the twenties is probably the thick, verbose, and not quite first-rate book by Theodore Dreiser, significantly entitled *The American Tragedy* (1925). It dramatizes the most superficial form of the American dream of perfection—the road to success and wealth. What Dreiser stresses is the power of this derisive dream that leads the hero to commit a crime and causes his downfall.

It is too soon to claim that the typical novel of the fifties has already been written, but we can envisage a kind of composite image of it by juxtaposing a few recent works that are supposed to portray contemporary American life. For example, we might compare books like the war story *From Here to Eternity* by James Jones, which won the National Book Award in 1952, with Saul Bellow's *The Adventures of Augie March*, which won the same award for 1953; and the recent novel, *Marjorie Morningstar*, written by Herman Wouk, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 1952 for his *Caine Mutiny*. These books, and others that we might enumerate, have many traits in common. Not only are they very thick—one might almost say cubic—but they deal with comparable experiences and are similarly oriented.

To begin with, we always find the American dream in its most superficial form: a dream of wealth and success, of independence and happiness. Then comes contact with reality, with cruelty, horror, and violence—favorite themes of the American novel. Thirty years ago Hemingway's characters rejected life because of such a clash. The new American hero reacts in quite a different way. At the end of the book, with a unanimity that is as revealing as it is monotonous, he becomes aware of his true nature and his limitations, and he accepts life with all its imperfections. The soldier whom James Jones describes in *From Here to Eternity* has experienced the worst horrors of military life; but, at the end of the novel, he goes back into service. Augie March, Saul Bellow's hero, accepts his failures without bitterness and ends his story with this consoling thought: "I may well be a flop. . . . Columbus too thought he was a flop, probably, when they sent him back in chains. Which didn't prove there was no America."⁸ As for Marjorie Morgenstern, Herman Wouk's heroine, she is not going to become Marjorie Morningstar, a Broadway success; she will be Mrs. Schwartz, a true Jewish-American bourgeoisie, pious, full of good works, a good mother; she will forget her adolescent dream, and in her simple happiness she will be the envy of those who achieved the hollow success to which she had aspired.

8. Saul Bellow, *The Adventures of Augie March* (New York: Viking Press, 1953), p. 536.

Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel

In 1927 André Siegfried published an important cultural study entitled *America Comes of Age*. The title echoes that of a pamphlet published by Van Wyck Brooks in 1915, *America's Coming of Age*, which, and this is curious, has just been reprinted in a popular collection. Such titles show that those who are concerned with the essence of American civilization realize very clearly that the United States is in the process of traversing a decisive stage in its spiritual development. The novels we have mentioned are, of course, works of paltry quality; but their popularity is most instructive. It suggests America's awareness that it is emerging from the frothy illusions of its collective adolescence.

One can assume that this is a form of moral progress. Nonetheless, the European intellectual would be quite wrong to lean upon his seniority and, with a protective and indulgent air, to look down upon this offshoot of European culture transplanted to the other side of the ocean. There are signs that seem to indicate that, in a great many domains, America is, in fact, coming of age and is reaching the maturity that our ancient Europe has known for many centuries. But we must not forget that maturity is the biological moment when growth ceases. Whatever course American literature might follow tomorrow, we will always remember with gratitude that, thanks to spokesmen like Melville, Faulkner, Hemingway, and Warren, it made a contribution to Western civilization that only adolescence, fresh to life, can make: a concern for moral and spiritual integrity, enthusiasm, a total revulsion in the face of evil and corruption, and a sharp feeling for the real, essential problems of life—problems that "maturity" often prefers to forget in the illusion of having transcended them.

BOOK REVIEWS

Peter Krausser

The Primitive World and Its Transformations

By ROBERT REDFIELD

(Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1953; 2d ed., Great Seal Books, 1957.) Pp. xiii + 185.

Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf

Edited and with an Introduction by J. B. CARROLL, Foreword by STUART CHASE
(New York: Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons; London: Chapman & Hall, Ltd., 1956.) Pp. x + 278.

Nonverbal Communication: Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations

By JURGEN RUESCH and WELDON KEES

(Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956.) Pp. 205.

The mere existence of a work like that of Whorf typically illustrates the changes which, according to Redfield, occur with the beginning of towns in

the world of primitive homogeneous societies. The methodical investigation of the cultures and languages of other societies is, so to speak, only the last

Book Reviews

phase of different cultures meeting each other, which began to assume considerable proportions with the origin of towns.

Looking at the problem from Whorf's point of view and from the point of view of cultural relativism, for which he has collected any number of examples and thorough analyses from the field of languages, the first question is whether it is at all possible to make general statements on the world of primitive man. There are, however, two independent criteria for such statements. The archeological discoveries of material and tools used by pre-civilized man allow conclusions concerning his ways of life, and the research of ethnologists reveals the life of people who are still precivilized in our days. Redfield himself did ethnological field work. On the basis of information from both sources he carefully provides us with a picture of the general features of primitive societies. These communities are still very small, so that everybody knows everybody else. They are isolated from each other, self-sufficient, and autocratic. If outsiders turn up, they are almost always similar human beings coming from similar communities, tribes, or settlements nearby. Men of one community are uniform in origin, customs, rites, and attitudes. They feel that they belong together by nature and take their own way of living and their own ideas for granted and consider them far superior to those of any strangers.

Whorf provides us with an interesting supplement to this point by showing that, always and everywhere, even in isolated society, every language con-

tains a metaphysics, a tentative idea of the world which remains more or less unconscious and therefore tends to be considered final. It is true that there is a difference between the situation in the isolated societies which are scientifically and technically primitive and the civilized societies. For the former societies it might be true that the metaphysics of language is at the same time that of those who speak the language; for modern civilized societies, however, Whorf claims that this is not true: in civilized society it is necessary to distinguish between the metaphysics of the theory of relativity and the metaphysics of the languages in which this theory was discovered. Thus every language contains some metaphysics, although it need not be the metaphysics of anyone who speaks the language nor need any of those who speak the language be even acquainted with this metaphysics. For this very reason the speaker's outlook on life is uncontrollably influenced and modified by the outlook on life codified in the language. Newton's conception of space, for instance, very exactly fitted the reifying tendency in all those languages he knew. This does not mean that his conception was due to these languages. It is sufficient to ask one's self whether such a conception of space would not have been very improbable if Newton had known only languages in which abstractions like space could not be reified. As language structures are never universal but are only valid for one language or a family of languages, every language to a certain degree and in a certain sense isolates one society, even a civilized one, from the others. As Wilhelm v. Humboldt indicated,

every language draws a circle around those who speak it, "a circle which can only be left by entering at the same time that of another language."

This possibility, however, is given to any appreciable extent only with civilization, with the rise of towns, which leads various communities of culture and languages to meet and to mix with each other and also forces more or less neighboring communities to get acquainted with strange ways of living. Before that time there is no differentiation of specialists in the primitive isolated society. There are, of course, even in that early stage, men with special talents for one activity or another which all have to perform, but, in general, they share the same knowledge and activities and have very similar interests and experiences. Their mutual relations are primarily individual and personal. The next man is looked upon not as a part of mechanical co-operation but as a person. And "nature" is perceived in the same way. The cosmos is personal and human. Not only mutual usefulness, the "unity of economic interests" (Childe), binds the members of these societies together; the stimulus for work and for the exchange of services and goods also results from a traditional sense of obligation which is rooted in personal position and social—mainly family—relations. Thus many considerations of relationship, religion, and morals play a part—more so than does ownership. The norms for action are not yet formal. They are based on a common belief in the foundation and aim of life, in good and evil, a belief which is irrational and therefore cogent and forceful. In a word, a spiritual,

moral, and ethical tie holds a precivilized community together! This tie has not been equally strong everywhere. But the author emphasizes that it has existed in all cases. And I think that there can hardly be a serious doubt of the existence of a spiritual order in the sense in which Redfield uses the concept. His concept of "moral order" means the totality of implicit convictions of right and wrong, of explicit ideals, and of similarities of conscience which bind and unite people. Compared with this spiritual order, all other forms of human activity are the "technical order."

The relation of these two orders can serve to distinguish the civilized from the precivilized condition; in primitive society the moral order is strong and predominant compared with the technical, which is still weak. In civilized society this relation is not simply reversed. With the development of the, technical order, the moral order does not become weaker but only different, and it even reaches a new greatness. The relation between the two orders becomes unstable and complex. Although Redfield never says this in so many words, what he does say demonstrates very clearly that there are not only technical revolution and technical progress but also moral revolutions and a peculiar moral "progress." This thesis, which I have rendered here somewhat crudely but which, in Redfield's work, is subtle and by no means naïve, seems to me to be the very backbone of the author's entire conception. Let us therefore discuss it a little more elaborately. Nobody will seriously doubt, for example, that thought, too, in human

Book Reviews

societies is subject to great transformations and even radical revolutions and that such changes in spiritual and moral attitudes and value judgments can in themselves produce far-reaching transformations in concrete ways of living. It is true that spiritual changes are less easy to put one's finger on than changes of a technical kind, and they cannot be dated with the same precision or even in the same manner. But, according to Redfield, one can try to identify such transformations of the spiritual order by the very comparison of the ways of life of primitive peoples in the present with that of civilized peoples in history. The general course of development seems to be as follows: in the beginning (in the precivilized state) the moral-spiritual order is predominant, but it is rigid, that is to say, incapable of changing by its own initiative. With the beginning and progress of civilization it becomes less dominant but, on the other hand, more independent, that is to say, it acquires a faculty of changing on its own initiative (not only in adaptation to changed economic-technical circumstances). It thus acquires what a man like Nicolai Hartmann¹ calls the peculiar vitality and historicity of the objective spirit.

If we consider these ideas from the point of view of what was said in connection with Whorf about the fundamental data of all culture—language—we hit upon a multitude of interesting problems. Language and the world outlook hidden in it, or rather in its varying structure, are a basic fact of both the technical and the moral orders. It is,

therefore, hard to classify within this dualism. Moreover, languages are more than means of communication. They are, in addition, instruments or vehicles of thinking. But, as they are invariably instruments of a very complex systematic structure of their own (there are no primitive languages!), they do not simply serve thinking but also form and determine it to a large extent, because the way a language divides and connects material is determined by its structural categories. Now these language structures are to a large degree "background phenomena"; they function automatically and thus not consciously. But even though they are unconscious they rule over our speaking and thinking, our conception of the world, and our behavior in world and society. For our behavior is not directly determined by a physical situation but to a large extent by the linguistic analysis and verbal expression of the situation. There are also highly subtle and complex relations between the cultural norms of behavior and the structural character of any language. Unfortunately, we have not yet acquired general knowledge of the subject. Such knowledge would certainly have great and various significance for Redfield's problems among others. This is one of the most interesting aspects of metalinguistic research. Another point is this: If languages are, so to speak, codifications of a culture, of a social outlook on world and life, and if, at the same time, owing to the complexity of their structure and their continuous task of perpetuating traditions, they are the most conservative part in the objective spiritual life of a people, they constantly re-

1. *Problem des Geistigen Seins* (Berlin and Leipzig: W. de Gruyter Co., 1933).

flect an outlook on life abandoned by the society in question—that is to say, if their spiritual and technical codes are alive and progressing, as is the case with the majority of civilized, and therefore open, societies that are in cultural contacts with others. If Redfield's opinion is correct, there should be found in most languages of primitive peoples more traces of the moral than of the technical order. And it should also be expected that the discrepancy which exists, for example, in the Western Indo-European societies between the conception of the world documented by their languages and obstinately preserved through the centuries and the actually prevailing conception is one between a moral personalizing view and one neutral in this respect. This seems, as far as we can see, to be really the case. And what Redfield says when he considers the changes to which precivilized societies are subject with the rise of towns seems to fit into this pattern. (It is not a question of the societies in the towns but of men and communities surrounding the towns.) By establishing stable and peaceful relations with strangers who do not belong to one's own community, social life gains an entirely new dimension, and, in order to control and organize it, new institutional forms are required. Without generally being able to read and to write, even the uneducated country dwellers learn to appreciate written material as something significant. Some of them learn to read and to write and, owing to this ability, obtain a special position for the purpose of communicating with the town. This inaugurates a new differentiation. For the town itself heterogeneity is always

characteristic. Cultural contact and mixture are always accompanied by doubts about the traditional moral order. These doubts, differentiation, and technical development create a twofold tendency of development in the moral order: destruction of the old order and construction of a new one on a new, more comprehending level—"constant anabolism and catabolism." In the isolated, closed, precivilized society there is not yet any struggle between different moral orders or ethical systems or any missionaries and prophets. With the creation of cities, however, the moral order of the small community becomes a thing which must be defended, which is controversial and in need of a renaissance. The moral order begins—to a certain and increasing extent—to be "produced" by an elite or class which also expands and develops some traditional ideas by means of speculation. And thus the spiritual order begins to lead an active life of its own: the fact that this order is being doubted and subjected to controversy arouses man to spiritual and moral creativity which in its turn increasingly takes concrete shape in external institutions and even influences the technological development. There arises the consciousness of a mission, of the task of expanding one's own power, customs, laws, and legal conceptions. All attempts in this direction are, however, in Redfield's opinion, doomed to be abortive because they all work under the old (infantile) assumption of the superiority and the privileged status of one's own people. And this assumption itself produces adversaries and destroyers in the other peoples.

Book Reviews

The lasting individual ethical and religious creations in the moral order always take their origin from men who have no material power or have surrendered it (Confucius, Buddha) and try to encompass all mankind spiritually: "The ideas . . . which are most powerful are those that are intended for everybody." Such new ideas are still effective among us; the ideas of eternal peace, of universal human responsibility, and of universal human rights. Although it may be correct to call them unrealistic utopias, Redfield is just as correct in emphasizing that experience proves that they are among the greatest powers in the history of mankind and that their strength lies in their universality.

If we follow Redfield in comparing the general features of the primitive and the civilized peoples, we find essentially that God, man, and nature are three separate items to us, while they are a unit or at least three sides of one thing to the primitive. In our thinking man and not-man face each other; in that of primitive people they usually include each other according to their order. Moreover, man and not-man are united in one moral order for the primitive man. The entire universe is personal and morally significant in all there is, visible and invisible. For the civilized Western man, however, it is predominantly impersonal, neutral: it is not concerned with man.

The fifth chapter of Redfield's book is devoted to that peculiar and perhaps most important fact of civilization that man more and more consciously plans and forms himself, his society, and its culture. According to Redfield, this

process begins before civilization does. Without agreeing with him in every respect, he holds with Paul Radin² that even in precivilized societies rudimentary reflective, critical, and creative thinking was not altogether lacking. Although the great conscious spiritual revolutions only occur in civilization, small and tiny voluntary and systematic transformations are achieved by some members of primitive countries. All in all, Redfield sees only a difference in degree—though a tremendous one. There is, however, one exception. Not before but in civilization does education acquire its function of not only handing down tradition but of creating, revolutionizing, transforming, and reforming. Only in modern civilization could the idea occur to employ education against tradition for creating a new society and culture.

In the last chapter we witness a critical and lively argument of Redfield with cultural relativism. Redfield could not, as an anthropologist with practical experience of his own, simply reject it. With all its courage to pass value judgments and to pose questions, the entire book shows the critical and conscious concern with the dangers implied in the undeniable fact of the cultural relativity of almost all interesting anthropological statements. But, like all great scholars, Redfield is aware of the variety, the ramifications, the manifold layers of scholarly activities that encompass the most varied societies and cultures. In these scholarly endeavors the findings and results of the individual are con-

2. *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (New York and London: D. Appleton Co., 1927).

stantly and mutually controlled and criticized so that in the long run all that is only relative is characterized as such and eliminated. Whether one is justified for that reason in reducing the significance of cultural relativism to the demand for acknowledgment of the intrinsic value of any culture, however foreign it may be to us, must obviously be doubted in view of the discoveries of Whorf, which are extremely enlightening and disillusioning in this respect. Cultural anthropology or ethnology, as far as it is concerned with still existing primitive societies, is by no means pure behavioral research. It must, to a large extent, be based on linguistic statements of members of the peoples in question. But then it is not sufficient to acknowledge the strange cultures and their contents; the first step is to get acquainted with them. Cultural relativity, however, is concerned with the knowledge of what is strange within its own frame of reference. The task which Whorf sets to himself, to linguistics and to metalinguistics, is to demonstrate the enormous difficulties that are implied and the possibilities of their relative solution. The difficulties are these: foreign languages must be structurally investigated in order to exactly understand statements made in them. To do so, it is necessary to realize that besides "overt" structures and grammatical categories there are those which are "covert." These "cryptotypes" may, contrary to those "phenotypes," without any recognizable formal grammatical sign or morpheme, and without correspondence to any actual word, be factors of significance in grammar, of functionally eminent importance. They usually have the charac-

ter of systems of reference. Systems of reference and cryptotypes are discoveries of the French grammarian Fabre d'Olivet (1768-1823), yet it is apparently Whorf who deserves to be praised for the critical and scientific confirmation, development, and use of these ideas. It is extremely important to investigate the cryptotypes linguistically, because they prevent us from adequately describing even the phenotypical categories of, for example, a new Indo-European language by means of the phenotypical categories of our own language or family of languages. Whorf gives interesting examples of how the phenotypes of the Hopi language can be correctly appreciated and described only after a thorough analysis of many cryptotypes.

Identical physical and social situations are articulated differently by different languages according to their points of view. The basic assumption for correctly appreciating a fundamentally different language is, therefore, the answer to the basic problems of linguistics which can be expressed by the simple question: How do they do it? The answer to this question and with it the bulk of the work needed to—relatively—overcome linguistic relativity can be approached by two methods, used simultaneously: (a) by comparing different languages and, (b) by comparing the linguistic organization with one that is independent of all differences of language. One example is the figure-ground differentiation in perception and its laws.

Fortunately, cultural anthropology can add other methods to the two mentioned above. There is, above all, the

Book Reviews

comparison of the verbal and the non-verbal reaction to given situations. There is, in addition, it seems to me, comparison with the non-verbal languages. To be able to make this comparison, it is true, the non-verbal speaking would have to find the attention that is due to it, and that, fortunately, it seems to be gradually finding. This field is even approached from different sides. On the one hand, it seems as if the research made by K. Lorenz Tinbergen and others, so far predominantly on animals, is now turning to man; and, on the other hand, there is the highly interesting book by Ruesch and Kees specifically devoted to non-verbal communication which promises to be an excellent supplement to Whorf's studies of verbal languages. More than three hundred excellent, expressive photos give, so to speak, a first "cartography" of the manifold forms of non-verbal communication. Following and referring to Whorf, the author suggests establishing, as a kind of parallel to modern linguistics and metalinguistics, an entirely new brand of science: with a grammar and syntax, a logical (or rather analogical) and psychological analysis, and, finally, a comprehensive anthropological theory of non-verbal communication. This first—and we hope not last—attempt makes it clear that a more exact knowledge of the wordless communication which is constantly practiced everywhere might be of great value in many ways.

First of all, as mentioned above, it could add an important criterion of comparison to the linguistics and metalinguistics of Whorf. Second, knowledge of this kind seems to be of

great interest for education, among other things. This would be true especially if Ruesch's theory of the significance of non-verbal communication in the first years of life, its forming function for the personality and its decisive influence on the development of the ability to make contacts and on the social adaptation of the individual, should on closer examination prove as promising as it seems now. It seems very probable that this research could mean a great deal also for psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, psychiatrists, physicians, judges, advertising experts, and industrial psychology.

The possibly close relation to linguistics is indicated by the following observation: Numerous metacommunicative instructions for interpreting a verbal expression are always implied in the manner of our verbal communications whether spoken or written. Often the words of our fellow men, even those who speak the same language, would be entirely incomprehensible without a non-verbal "commentary." This fact becomes even more significant because it seems to have a partly international, intercultural, and supratemporal character. The language of objects naturally plays a particular part in this context, as it shows many features which, according to Whorf's methodical postulate, are preserved throughout all differences of verbal languages. An attempt is being made to outline something like a syntax for this language. The language of action, of movement, of posture, of gestures, of dance, of mimics, of physical appearance, of apparel, of traces of action—they all have their place here—may contain a small number of general

features, but it is essentially tied to groups, classes, native races, and cultures. These relations and their limitations will naturally become problems which are important in themselves both from the point of view of cultural anthropology and of sociology.

Finally, we wish to point out two questions which Whorf indicates with significant allusions and thoughts. These are the artificial languages of symbolic logics and the idea of a universal world language. Only a few in the present day will doubt, Whorf says, that linguistics is of fundamental significance for epistemology and for human scholarship in general because it cannot avoid using one language or another. This is not changed by the fact that scholarship sometimes employs an artificial language of modern symbolic logic. Even the formulas of such an artificial language depend on the natural language which was selected as a starting point, and they reflect the peculiarities of its unconscious structure. Unfortunately, most authors of symbolic logic lack the linguistic training and the familiarity with the phenotypic and cryptotypic structural categories of essentially different languages from very different families of languages, a knowledge which is indispensable for this purpose. Drawing the right conclusions from the findings of Whorf and of linguistics, the following statements can hardly be avoided. A purely conventional and arbitrary language is practically impossible; but, in

order to attain an optimal degree of objectivity in an arbitrarily constructed symbolic logic, it seems indispensable to create several formalized artificial languages that take their origin from natural languages of entirely different families which can mutually criticize and control each other. For this purpose and for many other reasons it would be desirable for anthropologists and linguists to obtain a world-wide knowledge of grammatical structure—phenotypes and cryptotypes.

Whorf's research and thought show, as he has stated himself, that the idea of a universal world language, which pops up in our time over and over again, aims at a dangerous ideal. The realization of this ideal would endanger the further development of the human spirit and of objective knowledge. One single living world language would eliminate the scientifically important corrective of the experience that the same things can be thought of in entirely different ways in very different languages. The danger that the structure of a universal language would become a real bed of concrete for all thinking would be immense. Thinking along this line makes us realize that cultural relativity of all statements is not something solely negative which linguistics and cultural anthropology should try to overcome as far as possible; it is also eminently positive, particularly from the scholarly point of view.

A. W. Macdonald

*Tendances de l'art khmer: Commentaires sur 24 chefs
d'œuvre du Musée de Phnom-Penh*

By J. BOISSELIER

("Publications du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque de Diffusion," Vol. LXII [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956].) Pp. 118+24 photographic plates.

Angkor, hommes et pierres

Text by B. P. GROSlier and photographs by J. ARTHAUD

(Paris: Arthaud, 1956.) Pp. 232 (124 of them helioengravings)+6 color plates and 3 maps.

The Art and Architecture of Japan

By R. T. PAINE and A. SOPER

(Harmondsworth: Pelican Books Ltd., 1955.) Pp. 316 (173 of them black-and-white plates)+40 drawings.

The Art and Architecture of China

By L. SICKMAN and A. SOPER

(Harmondsworth: Pelican Books Ltd., 1956.) Pp. 334 (192 of them black-and-white illustrations)+40 drawings.

Arts de l'Asie ancienne, thèmes et motifs, III: La Chine

By M. HALLADE

("Publications du Musée Guimet, Recherches et Documents d'Art et d'Archéologie," Vol. V [Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956].) Pp. 92+574 sketches.

The production of books generally subsumed under the classification "History of Art" continues to be extremely

varied. True, this division of the humanities occupies a solid place today in most of the large university cities. But

the material studied by that discipline and its related branches interests not only students of school and university age in quest of degrees and diplomas; many people who cannot attend courses are also interested in books which will introduce them to the subject matter of the history of art—books which serve not as substitutes for consultation, in specialized libraries, of the great volumes produced by the masters of the discipline (often prohibitively priced) but which will make that consultation less difficult. It is particularly encouraging to list the variety of excellent guides to the arts of the Far East addressed to the curious public. For, if the superior collections of Far Eastern art which are found in the West today are encountered, for the most part, in museums accessible to the public, these collections are often centralized in the great cities. Those who live in the provinces frequently do not have occasion to see them, and even from one city to another it is not always easy to consult them. Moreover, few among us can hope to visit a Cambodian museum. Thanks, then, are due to the director of the Albert Sarraut Museum of Phnom Penh, who provides catalogues of his collections for the use of specialists, and has recently given us a thorough and important work on *La Statuaire khmère et son évolution*, for having had the idea of offering us *Tendances d'art khmère*. The subtitle of the work indicates clearly its concern: *Commentaires sur 24 chefs d'œuvre du Musée de Phnom-Penh*. The author "proposes as his purpose merely to present and to comment on forty-eight pieces of sculpture chosen from among those most representative of

Khmer art . . . to bring together pieces whose aesthetic quality is undeniable, to show in a striking résumé the evolution of the sculpture during some ten centuries of Khmer history." Besides some twenty-four plates, well chosen for their appeal, and the explanatory titles which accompany them, M. Boisselier provides as "introduction" several pages on the history and the religions, four pages on the sculpture itself, and a selective bibliography. The modest aim stated by the author and the limited size of his book diminish in no way its real value. It provides reliable information as well as clear analyses by a man who manifestly loves the works of art in his care and knows how to convey his enthusiasm to others. A popularization of good quality, it is intelligently presented. The Bibliothèque de Diffusion du Musée Guimet seems to have adopted a new type of paper which is well suited to works profusely illustrated, such as this one.

The second volume on Cambodia with which we are concerned, *Angkor, hommes et pierre*, is of a quite different format and appeal. I have rarely held in my hands a book of this genre whose presentation and arrangement has been so elegantly conceived. The plates in heliogravure (the work in great part of M. Jacques Arthaud) are superb, and the aerial photographs by the author, B.-P. Groslier, provide striking samplings of that unique civilization that was Ankora and which he has had the good fortune and the merit to reveal to us through exposures made by the perspective of the gods. The dummy of the book, moreover, was designed by M. F. Cali, with good taste and sensitivity.

Book Reviews

Groslier, Ancien Secrétaire-Général de l'École Française d'Extrême-Orient, knows Cambodia well, having lived there for many years. He is an informed archeologist who not only possesses a fine knowledge of the medieval history of the southeast Asiatic countries but is also very much aware of modern excavating techniques, and we await with impatience the publication of his own research in the latter domain, at present insufficiently known. "What is said in general about Ankora," he tells us in the present book, "is so vague that it has seemed necessary to me to support the illustrations by a text far longer than that which ordinarily accompanies this sort of work." One need not complain, for his text, which calls to mind the remarkable syntheses of his late master, René Grousset, is a model of the type. It sets forth clearly and succinctly the geographical frame and the milieu, natural and cultural, that received "the Indian leaven" and transformed it into a transplendent but short-lived civilization. His text also furnishes sound points of reference for a better understanding of the Khmer civilization in its entirety. Not only are the architecture and sculpture treated in his analysis; religion, symbolism, society, economic organization, kingly megalomania, the administrative machine, the decorative and minor arts, the day-to-day life in close contact with the kings—all these elements of the culture are included. Nonetheless, this is not an excessively lyrical panegyric. In conclusion, Groslier says with considerable justice of the signification and the extent of the Khmer civilization: "It is easy to find a more sophisticated archi-

ture, more remarkable sculpture, more logical decoration. . . . As with its culture, Khmer art has not been a source of universal inspiration. . . . Let us admit, it is an instinctive art, without limit—and too often verbose, without heirs. Ankora remains, however, a unique entity, fascinating for him who discovers it, as for him who studies it over many years." The author uses as often as possible the translations of Barth, de Bergaigne, de Finot, and M. G. Coedès of the lapidary texts written in Sanskrit in order to adapt them as titles for the photographic plates. Some short studies on the great stages of Khmer art also accompany the excellent illustrations of Khmer iconography. A repertory of Khmer iconography, a note on the proper names and their pronunciation, a bibliography, a synoptic chronological chart of the Mediterranean world (Indian, Khmer, Southeast Asiatic, and Chinese), and some indexes of texts, photographs, and maps (three of these) complete a very fine book which does honor to all who collaborated in its execution. Its price is obviously high, but it is a work which should figure in all libraries of Asiatic art. An English edition is already in course of preparation. One would like to see a team similarly qualified undertake an equally sumptuous presentation of certain archeological remains of Burma, so little known to the public.

With the books dedicated to Japan and China, which are part of "The Pelican History of Art," we touch on the domain of those manuals which seek to embrace the art of a whole country and which, although useful for students, are extremely difficult to set forth success-

fully. The authors of the volume on Japan are already known to a large public: Robert Paine for his *Japanese Screen Paintings* and for *Ten Japanese Paintings in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston* and Alexander Soper for his study on *The Evolution of Buddhist Architecture in Japan*. As for the division of labor, decided, probably, by the editor, Mr. Soper is concerned with architecture and Mr. Paine with painting and sculpture. It is the cutting-up of the material which is open to criticism, since in a volume of these dimensions, devoted to the artistic heritage of Japan, one would like to see a large enough place accorded the minor arts, as, for example, pottery or the textiles. But perhaps the editors intend to give us a later volume dedicated to the handicrafts of the Far East. The same reservation applies to the volume on China, where Mr. Soper is again responsible for architecture and Lawrence Seckman, director of the Nelson Gallery of Art and Atkins Museum, Kansas City, for painting and sculpture. In this case one would also like to see a little more space given to the extra-national influence of Chinese art, in Vietnam and in Thibet, for example. However, it is manifestly impossible to cover everything in studies of this sort and it should be said emphatically that the sum of information crowded into these two volumes is, in any case, remarkable. Mr. Soper's texts are particularly worthy of praise. For Japan he gives us not only a well-organized chronological résumé of his subject matter, clearly delineating the Korean and Chinese influences at the same time that he underlines the indigenous contribution, but in a very few

pages he succeeds in making us feel the importance of the role played by individuals and the need for understanding the economic and ritual aspects of the Japanese constructions. The author has had the hardihood to exercise a choice, sometimes brutal, on his material, thereby placing the emphasis on certain periods rather than on others—he devotes five and one-half pages to Chinese architecture from 1368 to 1912, this material, according to him, having already been suitably presented to the West. This surgical technique is, to my mind, more rewarding than that adopted by the two other authors, whose texts, because of their desire to be all-inclusive, read far less easily. One might also criticize Mr. Soper for his tendency on occasion to condense to excess. It is a little surprising not to see in the "Chinese" bibliography at least a mention of the posthumous works of Henri Maspero and W. E. Soothill alongside the reference to the German translation of Wang Kouo-wei on the *Ming-t'ang*. But it is always easy to criticize detail in works which cover so large a domain. Let us rather thank the editors for producing these books which present the material so well and at so modest a price—given the renowned authority of the collaborators, the quality of the paper and the printing, and the abundant illustrations. The plan of the two books is essentially the same: 190 photographic plates in black and white following the texts on China, and 173 on Japan; two maps of China and three of Japan; notes appended at the end of the volume, where are also to be found the glossaries, indexes, and bibliographies. A list of the plates, indicating the source

Book Reviews

and on occasion the owner of the objects, precedes the text. On the whole, the authors have dealt extremely well with the difficulties which face a synthesis of these dimensions. Here we have two books which could do much to spread to the public a better comprehension of the art of China and Japan. In the volume on China choice of illustrations has been made from objects which are accessible in Western collections but which are not sufficiently well known to have figured in preceding books. This a welcome innovation. However, if one had to choose between the two volumes, I would take the one on Japan, in which innovation seems to me to have played a far greater part. There are already available excellent popular works on Chinese art; but he who finds himself interested in Japanese art has not had at his disposition, up to the present time, so complete and convenient a manual. The late Jean Buhot and Langdon Warner had already done much to disseminate a better knowledge of the arts of Japan, and their efforts are continued here in happy fashion. The average reader will perhaps be astonished to learn that the two authors have not been able to agree on the dates of the Kamakura, Muromachi, and Momoyama periods.

Melle Hallade's book on China "does not seek to constitute a history of art, nor an aesthetic analysis, but rather to offer an insight into the principal themes and especially into the motifs most frequently found in each region. Their appearance and their evolution

are indicated with a degree of rapidity." The book, in sum, is concerned especially with a repertory of themes for the use of students of the École du Louvre and of the faithful of the Musée Guimet. The first part is devoted to funereal and religious architecture, to iconography, and to anthropomorphic sculpture; the second part to lineal motifs, zoomorphs, flowers, and the elements of the countryside. The author does not seek to disguise the limitations of this manner of envisaging her material. "We are necessarily led," she writes, "to choose for the tracings motifs where the silhouette matters most." Although one cannot but subscribe to this statement, I must confess, for my part, to experiencing a certain constraint when the method is applied, for example, to Chinese painting. The reconstruction of Western painting by such a procedure furnishes material for a very curious book. This much being said, the volume is clearly written and comprises numerous drawings which, with the text, the bibliography, the map, and the chronological table, will be of great help to the public for whom it was intended. Nevertheless, Mr. Sickman had good reason to write in his work discussed earlier: "... it is a grave question whether one can, or should, attempt to trace anything like an orderly progress or systematic evolution of style towards a fixed goal. . . . So very little has survived that to select only those monuments which seem to illustrate a logical, irreversible evolution, will lead to errors."

Notes on the Contributors

MIRCEA ELIADE, a teacher and writer of note in the field of the history of religions, has also served as cultural attaché for the Rumanian Legation in London and in Lisbon. Following his 1956-57 visiting professorship at the University of Chicago, he has remained there as professor and as chairman of the field of history of religions of the Federated Theological Faculty. To his list of publications given in *Diogenes*, No. 9, have been added: *Forgerons et alchimistes* (Paris: Flammarion, 1956, *Mythes, rêves et mystères* (Paris: N.R.F., 1957),

and two English editions of previously published works: *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (translation, by Rosemary Sheed, of *Traité d'histoire des religions*) (London & New York: Sheed & Ward, 1958) and *The Myth of the Eternal Return* (translation, by Willard Trask, of *Le Mythe de l'éternel retour*) (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955).

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Notes on Contributors

research assistant in the Romance seminar of the University of Göttingen since 1956 and has published a number of articles on various subjects related to Romance literature and thought.

"Modern Myths" are discussed by JACQUES ELLUL in this issue. His bibliography will be found in *Diogenes*, No. 18, where he analyzed the distinction between information and propaganda.

MICHEL COLLINET, who contributed an article on syndicalism in the modern state to *Diogenes*, No. 14, writes here on the problems of society and the state. His most recent publication is *Du bolchevisme: évolution et variations du marxisme-leninisme* (Paris: "Le Livre Contemporain," Amiot-Dumont, 1957).

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Writer and journalist, BASIL DAVIDSON, has studied contemporary Africa and has published several books on that subject, including *Report on Southern Africa* (London: Cape, 1952), *The African Awakening* (London: Cape, 1955), and *The New West Africa* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953), as well as an account of his travels in Chinese central Asia: *Turkestan Alive* (London: Cape, 1957). For some years he has focused his attention on medieval and pre-medieval African history in eastern, central, and southern Africa and is now preparing a book on this subject.

ALBERT GÉRARD's sensitive article on romanticism and stoicism in the American novel will be of particular interest to readers of *Diogenes'* English-language edition. Born in Namur, Belgium, in 1920, the author is professor of English language and literature at the official university of the Belgian Congo and of the Ruanda Urundi in Elisabethville, and was invited to give courses in English literature at the University of Minnesota during the summer of 1958. He has published *L'Idée romantique de la poésie en Angleterre* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1955), as well as many studies in French and English on English romanticism, on the contemporary Anglo-Saxon novel, and on Shakespeare in a variety of literary reviews in Europe, Great Britain, Canada, and the United States.

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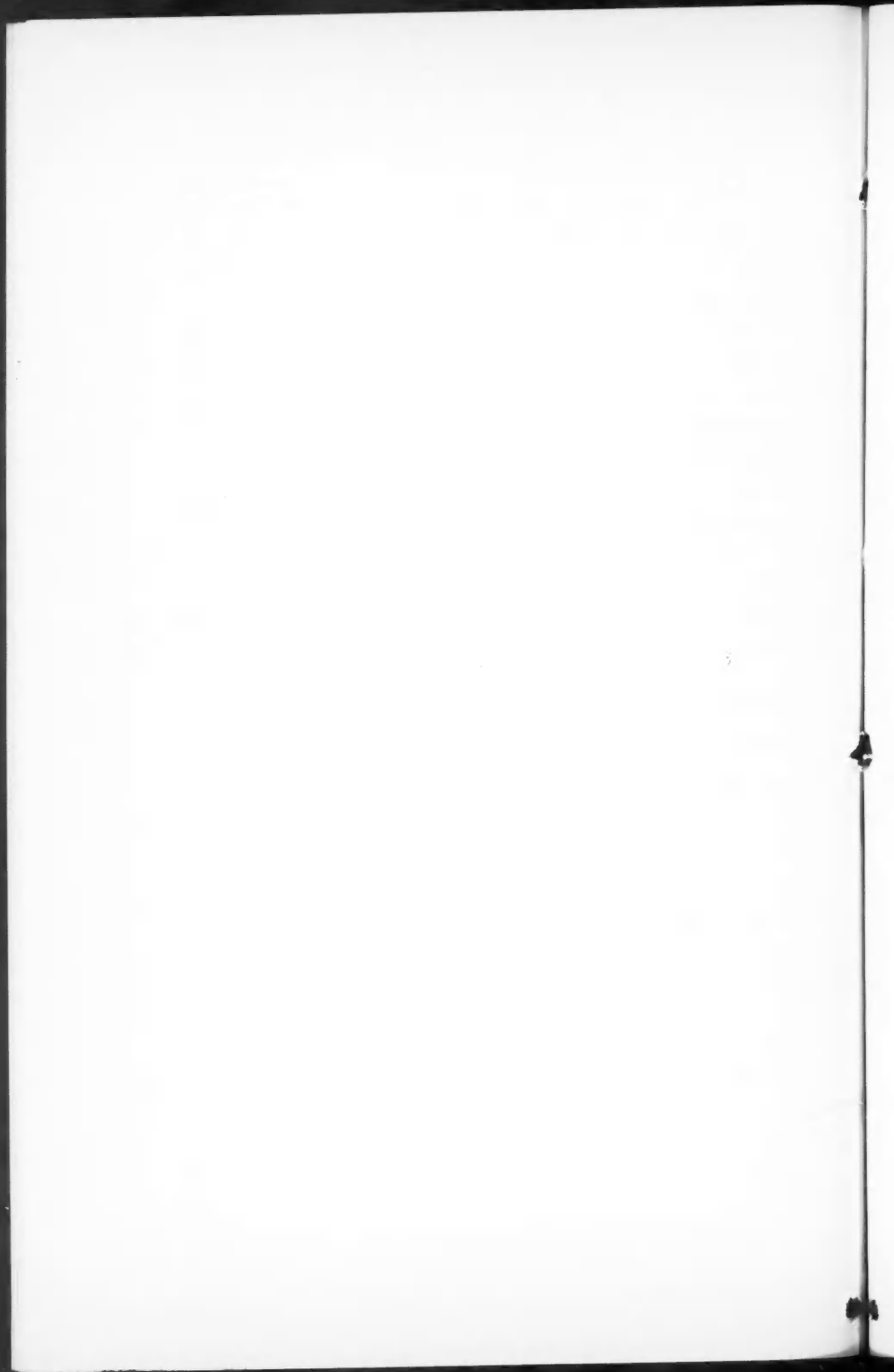
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My conviction is that in the humanities the most rigorous and responsible scholarship and the capacity to render this in terms accessible to a large public are only two of the inseparable aspects of the scholar's vocation. *Diogenes* seems to provide the very forum in which this vocation can find realization.

KARL KERÉNYI

CONTENTS

Myths, Ancient and Modern

MIRCEA ELIADE	The Prestige of the Cosmogonic Myth	I
RITA FALKE	Problems of Utopias	14
JACQUES ELLUL	Modern Myths	23

Society and the State

WALDEMAR VOISÉ	The Renaissance and the Sources of the Modern Social Sciences	41
MICHEL COLLINET	Social Structures and the Power of the State	64
BASIL DAVIDSON	Aspects of African Growth before A.D. 1500	79
ALBERT GÉRARD	Romanticism and Stoicism in the American Novel: From Melville to Hemingway, and After	95

BOOK REVIEWS

ROBERT REDFIELD: <i>The Primitive World and Its Transformations</i>	111
BENJAMIN LEE WHORF: <i>Language, Thought, and Reality</i>	
JURGEN RUESCH and WELDON KEES: <i>Nonverbal Communication: Notes on the Visual Perception of Human Relations</i> (PETER KRAUSSER)	
J. BOISSELIER: <i>Tendances de l'art khmer: Commentaires sur 24 chefs d'œuvre du Musée de Phnom-Penh</i>	120
B.-P. GROSlier and J. ARTHAUD: <i>Angkor, hommes et pierres</i>	
R. T. PAINE and A. SOPER: <i>The Art and Architecture of Japan</i>	
L. SICKMAN and A. SOPER: <i>The Art and Architecture of China</i>	
M. HALLADE: <i>Arts de l'Asie ancienne, thèmes et motifs, III: La Chine</i> (A. W. MACDONALD)	

Notes on the Contributors

125

